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BLACKWOOD'S ADVERTISER, MAY 1940.

All correspondence with reference to Advertisements should be addressed to—

Mr T. PRESTON, 32 Ludgate Hill, London, E. C. 4.

Telephone—City 2198.

COURAGE WINS.

**"I have no fears now; they have all disappeared,"
writes a Pelmanist after taking the Course.**

"**COURAGE** wins!" says a great newspaper in a leading article. "No Success without risk." This is perfectly true. "These are times which demand bold resolutions," the article continues. "Our race won its great place in the world because it was never afraid to take risks and because it combined the utmost daring in conception with the coolest resolution in execution. The man who waits for disasters is the man who goes under.

This is the spirit that wins success: this is the spirit which is developed by Pelmanism. Thousands of able and clever men and women fail every year to rise to higher positions because they lack Self-Confidence and Courage and are subject to various forms of Fear, Timidity, Shyness and Irresolution. All these weaknesses and failings are swept away by Pelmanism, and in their place there develops a strong Self-Confidence and "Will to Win," which, when accompanied by the general all-round efficiency secured by those who take the Pelman Course, wins the notice, approval and trust of others and carries its fortunate possessor irresistibly to success.

Courage and Confidence

The Pelmanist is not left to make the applications himself. An experienced and sympathetic instructional staff shows him, in exact detail, how to apply the principles of Pelmanism to his own circumstances and aspirations. Thus every Pelman Course is an individual Course. Over and over again our correspondents say, in effect: "I find that this Course was prepared for me, and me only." Substantially this is so, for the instructional notes and letters of advice are entirely personal to the individual.

Remember this—everything you do is preceded by your attitude of mind.

The present dominant aim for every man and woman must be to show a courageous, confident, well-equipped mental front. This assured, then all else will be achieved, and the world has no more proven method than Pelmanism to attain this end.

PELMANISM, 1914 and 1940

DURING 1914-18 the Pelman Institute, in London and throughout the Empire, made a real and important contribution to the efficiency of the nation. The value of Pelmanism as a training in personal efficiency was freely acknowledged by leaders in the military and naval forces, as well as by those carrying out the highly responsible civil work which the exigencies of the time demanded. During the Great War no fewer than 160 Admirals and Generals studied the Pelman Course, and their example was followed by over forty thousand other officers and men throughout the Services. Good as Pelmanism was in 1914-18, it is very much better in 1940. Added knowledge and experience have made it so.

Initiative, Courage, Optimism, Leadership—here are the real qualifications needed by men and women now, and these are the priceless boons that Pelmanism endows the personality with.

H.M. FORCES

All serving members are now entitled to receive the complete Pelman Course, with full tuition and guidance, at

One-Half Usual Fee

Immediate application should be made for Special Enrolment Form (Services).

Approved by War Office.

The Pelman Course has once again been thoroughly revised and rearranged to bring it right up to date with the latest scientific findings. The revised Course is fully explained in "**The Science of Success.**" The Course is simple and interesting and takes up very little time. You can enrol on the most convenient terms. The book will be sent you, gratis and post free, on application to-day to:—

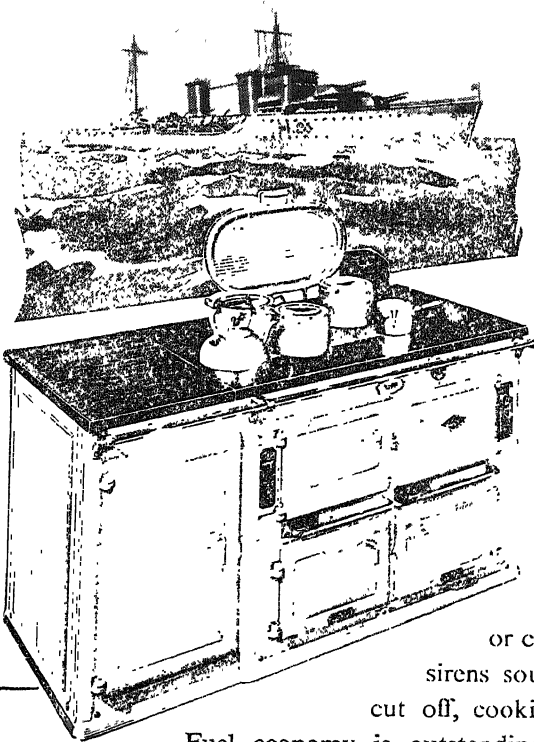
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(Established over 40 years)

102 Pelman House,

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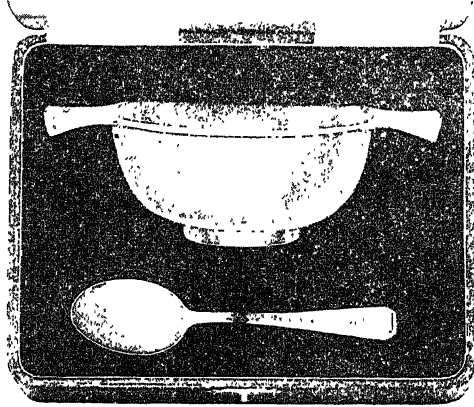
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*By Appointment
to the late
King George V.*

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THE QUAICH as a Christening Gift is popular because of its cleanliness and practicability.

When its purpose for a child has been served it makes an excellent Sugar Basin.

Thus your Gift of a Quaich is permanent, surviving during a boy's or girl's lifetime.

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At pre-war price—

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with detachable
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State height and size of chest when ordering.

Hard outer shell of waterproof khaki drill; rain and windproof interlining of extra heavy material; special devices to prevent wind and rain trickles penetrating collar, wrists and buttonholes. The 'Thresher,' supplied to more than 28,000 officers 1914-1918, is unsurpassed for keeping you warm and dry even in the dirtiest weather.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING HOW TO LEARN LANGUAGES

The Direct Method the Only Way.

THE only satisfactory method of learning a foreign language is the direct method. In other words, you must learn French in French, German in German, Spanish in Spanish and Italian in Italian. That is the Pelman method, and it is the only way.

It all depends upon the system. People fail to learn foreign languages because they have adopted the wrong method. Given the right method any normal man or woman can learn French, German, Italian or Spanish with surprising ease, without boredom and drudgery, and in a comparatively short time.

No Vocabularies to be Learnt Parrot Fashion.

It naturally follows from this that the old-fashioned method of memorising—parrot fashion—long lists of foreign words is entirely abolished when you learn a language by the "direct" way. You get to know each word by using it, and by using it in different ways and relationships. No long months trying to memorise lengthy vocabularies and dreary rules! You are guided naturally and instinctively, as a child is taught to quickly grasp words and their meanings, their fitness, their use—and their pronunciation.

Grammatical Difficulties and Drudgeries Eliminated.

Another consequence of this method is that it practically eliminates the difficulties and drudgeries of learning complicated grammatical rules and exceptions. According to the old method you learned the grammar first—and many people never got any further, if as far. But the Pelman method takes you straight to the language itself, and you learn the grammar as you go along and almost without any conscious effort.

A Four-Fold Method.

A few further points should be mentioned. This method teaches you not only to read a foreign language, but to write, speak and understand it thoroughly and efficiently. The eye is employed as well as the ear, and the hand as well as the voice. No

mechanical device can possibly give you that thorough mastery of a foreign language which is obtained when so many senses are employed as they are in the Pelman Language Courses.



Reading Foreign Literature.

It enables you to write and talk in a foreign tongue, to listen with enhanced pleasure to wireless programmes from foreign stations, to read foreign newspapers and magazines, and to enjoy the masterpieces of French, German, Italian and Spanish literature, many of which have never been translated and all of which (especially in the case of Poetry) lose much of their charm in an English version.

There are no classes to attend. The method enables you to learn a foreign language in your spare time, and in from one-third to one-half the usual period.

*Specially reduced fees for all
serving members of His Majesty's
Forces.*

Write for Free Book To-Day.

This method of learning languages, which has now been used for over 20 years with such success, is explained in a little book entitled 'The Gift of Tongues.' There are four editions of this book, one for each language:—

French, Spanish, German, Italian.

(Also Courses in Afrikaans and Urdu.)

You can have a copy of any one of these by writing for it to-day to:

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102 Languages House, Bloomsbury St.,
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State which book you want and a copy will be sent you by return, gratis and post free. Write or call to-day.

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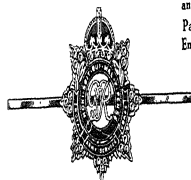
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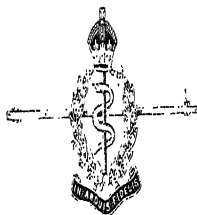
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Send in yours today.

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Whisky, 12 years old.





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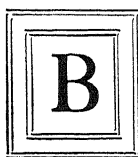


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TO BUSINESS MEN
who regularly
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Its readers have a high regard for its contents, and if the experience of those firms who advertise consistently in its columns may be accepted as a criterion, it is evident that 'Blackwood's' readers have a high regard for the advertising pages as well.

The purpose of this announcement, then, is to ask you to consider 'Blackwood' from the advertising point of view. You would, we believe, find an advertisement in 'Blackwood's' pages a profitable undertaking.

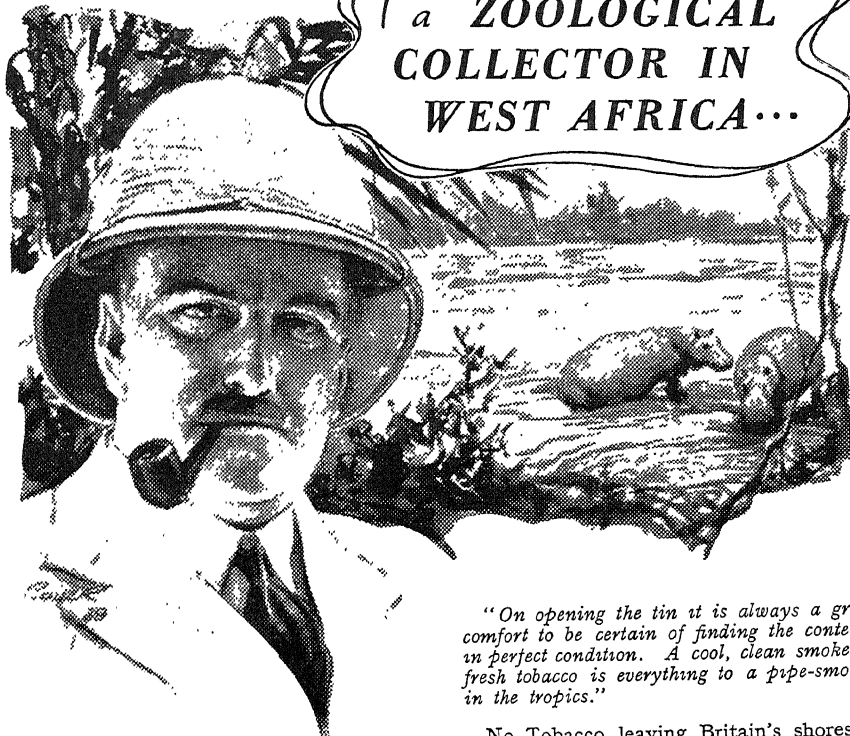
May the Advertisement Manager send you particulars of circulation and scale of charges?

The Advertisement Manager

'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE'
32 Ludgate Hill
L O N D O N, E. C. 4

PHONE NO.: CITY 2196

From
a **ZOOLOGICAL
COLLECTOR IN
WEST AFRICA...**



"Dear Sirs,

"It may interest you to know how much your tobacco is appreciated in a certain remote corner of tropical Africa.

"In the course of my duties I travel long distances by native canoe up the highest reaches of the River Benue. These journeys take me through country where the only visible inhabitants are baboons, river birds, crocodiles, and hippos. But loneliness on such occasions is greatly relieved and spirits enlivened by smoking a good brand of Tobacco. Punchbowl easily fills that rôle.

"On opening the tin it is always a great comfort to be certain of finding the contents in perfect condition. A cool, clean smoke of fresh tobacco is everything to a pipe-smoker in the tropics."

No Tobacco leaving Britain's shores is more welcome Overseas than Barneys, "friendliest of all tobaccos." Smokers are for ever telling us how much Barneys in its "EverFresh" packing means to them in the lonely places of the Earth. . . .

To-day we reproduce the gracious tribute of a noted Broadcasting Zoological Collector whose quests for specimens take him into the very heart of darkest Africa. Reading his letter one realises what Barneys means to him: the utter joy, the friendly companionship of good tobacco, always in perfect smoking condition

From the Tropics.. to the Polar Regions




BARNEYS

is always fresh



Barneys (medium). Punchbowl (full). Parsons
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Barneys "READY-FILLS," in Cartons of 12, 1/5d.

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Prize for Short Article

on

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Readers of 'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE' are invited by the Regent Institute to accept a prize offer which must appeal to everyone who has literary ambitions.

Even if you have never before attempted to write an article, this invitation gives you the chance to determine whether you have any facility with your pen.

Briefly, you are asked to write an article describing the most interesting experience of your life.

Nearly everyone has at some time had an experience or been the witness of a spectacle or an incident which has left a strong and lasting impression on the mind. It may have been unusual, thrilling, humorous or even definitely queer.

You will probably enjoy putting your experience on paper. Make a short article of it—say, 300-500 words.

Your aim should be to interest—not merely to impress. Describe your experience simply but vividly, avoiding long, pretentious words.

Be natural. Imagine that you are writing to a friend and want to give him a graphic picture of what you saw or experienced.

Your entry need not be type-written.

* * * *

Every reader of 'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE' who submits an article on the above subject to the Regent Institute will be presented with a prize copy of 'More Profit from Writing,' a practical and stimulating book packed with concise hints on how to get into print. The volume contains 88 pages and is attractively bound in green cloth. It makes a valuable addition to the bookshelf of anyone who is interested in writing as a profitable hobby.

If you submit an article you will also receive a free expert criticism and a copy of the Institute's prospectus, which describes the great field of opportunity for the new writer and gives particulars of the courses in article and short story writing conducted by that well-known correspondence school.

Your article will be returned with the free criticism. You do not commit yourself to any obligation and, of course, you retain the copyright of your article.

IMPORTANT.—All entries must be headed "Prize Book Offer" and be addressed to The Regent Institute (Dept. BW11), Regent House, Palace Gate, London, W.8. Be sure to write your name and address in the top right-hand corner of the article.



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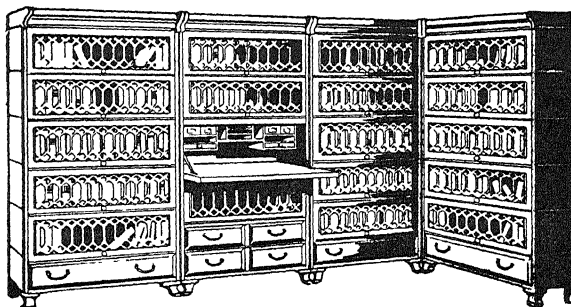
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Advertisement Pages
at the end of
this Number



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And yet
Look at it
Is it fit
To go out?
Not a doubt!
To be sure
You are secure
Put on your**



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No garment or material, unless it is the manufacture or merchandise of Burberrys Limited, may be described as "BURBERRY," a Registered Trade Mark protected all over the world.
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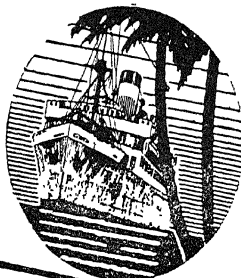
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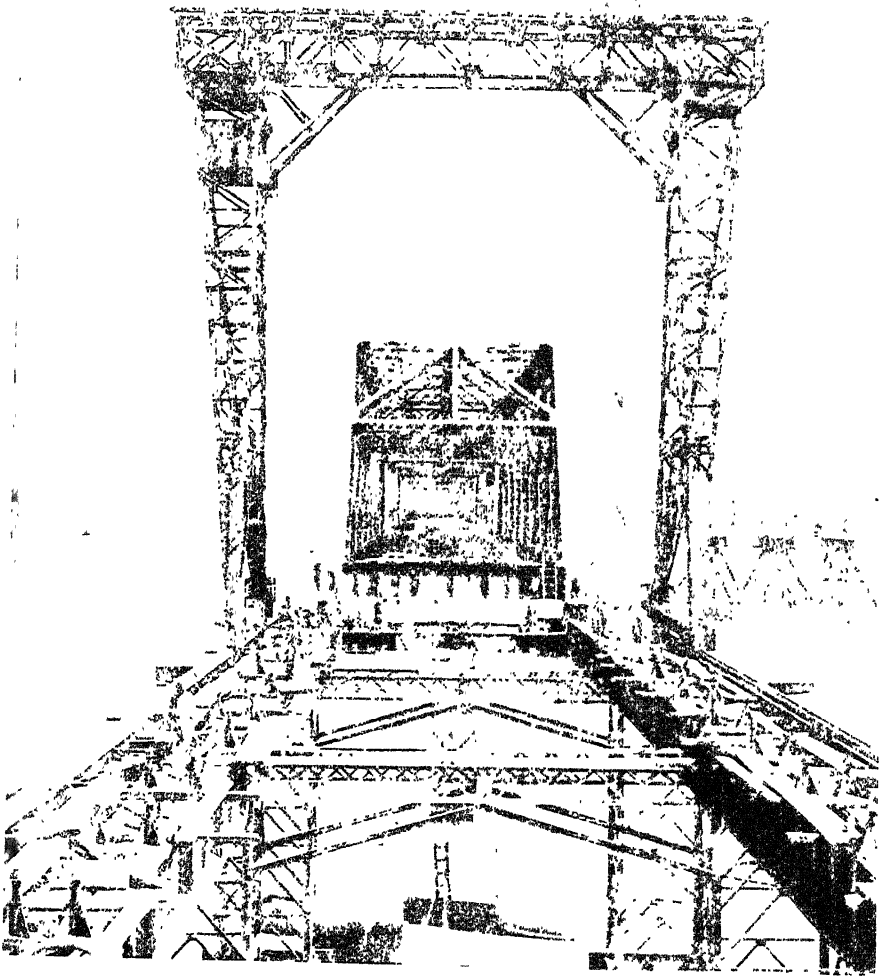
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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. 1495.

MAY 1940.

VOL. 247.

HERE HITLER CAME.

BY M. K. F.

It was in the days, which now seem so very far away, when Europe still lay within the frontiers designed for her by the Treaty of Versailles, that I spent a year in the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Under its first two Presidents, Mazaryk and Benesh, the young country had made wonderful progress, and I wandered happily from cosmopolitan Carlsbad and world-famous Pilsen through the lovely château country of the Bohemian Forest down to the shores of the Danube. Then turning east I crossed Moravia and Slovakia, and so came to the farthest confines of Ruthenia, which is now a part of Hungary. Here was a country different from anything that I had previously visited. Bears and wolves abounded in its virgin forests, down its swift rivers raced the long timber rafts on their perilous occasions, and

the magnificence of its mountain ranges gave promise of their future development into summer and winter playgrounds for visitors from less favoured lands.

Then I retraced my steps to the capital, the most beautiful in Central Europe, and spent some pleasant months seeking out its treasures and listening to its ancient legends.

It was from there that letters came to me a short time after the signing of the Munich Agreement, asking me whether I would return to do voluntary work with an English Committee, which was dealing with refugee problems.

I discovered that I could no longer book through to the Republic as time-tables had been suspended, so I travelled by short stages, finding out the local trains as I went, and it was in this leisurely fashion that I eventually reached my destination, and found a Prague outwardly little changed from the city

that I had known as the capital of one of the most advanced and intelligent democracies in Europe. Life was proceeding normally, and the Czechs, with their accustomed stubborn pluck and dourness, were settling down to reorganise their State within its narrower and more restricted boundaries.

But when I visited the homes of my friends I found sadness and heartbreak as they told me the tragic story of the September crisis. I heard how the whole nation had stood prepared for sacrifice, how the army answered the call to mobilise, as men dedicating themselves to a Holy War, and of the grief, indignation, and despair which shook them like a death rigor when they heard how they must lay down their arms, as they were unsupported by their Allies. How it was, in that awful moment, that their hearts broke and a wordless moaning rose from the crowds in the streets, which lasted from dawn till dawn and was, the listeners told me, the most strange and terrible sound that they had ever heard.

These things could never be forgotten, and what added poison to the bitter cup which they were forced to drink was their unalterable conviction that Hitler would never have fought if England and France had only held out firmly against his demands. Their magnificently equipped army, their great munition works, and their Maginot Line, for the construction of which they had cheerfully borne

the most crushing taxation; all this, which would have proved invaluable in any military alliance, they now saw flung on the scrap-heap.

Maps had been dropped by the Nazi aeroplanes over Prague, showing Europe, at progressive dates, neatly carved up between Germany and Italy. England, transformed into a small Teutonic island, lurked insignificantly in the North Sea, while the whole of the Mediterranean Littoral from Gibraltar to Nice, with a good and substantial *Hinterland*, went to the Latin partner.

More than ever now had Czechoslovakia become a landlocked island into which, as a last refuge, crowded political exiles from Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland, for whom the various committees were accomplishing all that was humanly possible. The Czech Red Cross and the Hicem—a Jewish association to help those of its own creed and race—were of local origin, and England and America were responsible for other organisations, and there was an excellently run political society, under the Leaders Jaksch and Taub, which dealt with members of the Social Democratic Party.

Our Lord Mayor's Fund, administered in the Republic, was mainly applied to the opening of Relief Camps in various parts of the country, where the destitute people could be gathered in, to be fed and clothed in their extremity.

We worked long hours every

day in the office, which I had joined, situated at the top of a block of flats, trying to bring some semblance of method into those broken lives, and to give them hope and the promise of an orderly pattern to be evolved eventually out of all the chaos. There were many things to contend with. Orders from abroad for emigration or immigration were constantly being changed, temporary restrictions were often imposed locally, just when we hoped most for a free hand, and the grants of money promised seemed to be unnecessarily held up when time was such an important factor in our task. There were so many nationalities to be dealt with, from the mosaic of people that is Central Europe, and so many highly cultured and well-dressed men and women who seemed as if they lacked nothing. But there was one essential denied to them, and it was the only thing that they asked for and without which they could not live—namely, the right to work for themselves and for their families.

The Czechs were well disposed to their Jewish fellow-subjects, going out of their way to employ them and to deal at their shops, but the iron grip of Germany was rapidly tightening and they were being forced to abandon this humanitarian attitude.

As our work went on, we soon learned to recognise at a glance the victims who had already suffered the hell of the concentration camps, with their

scarred bodies, palsied hands, and terrible stories. The occupants of these prisons were released from time to time to make room for fresh arrests, but *staatenlos* and without papers they could only wander in the limbo of No-man's-land until they were obliged to come back over the frontier. One young man had seen his old father forced to run round the prison-yard until he dropped from exhaustion. Then buckets of ice-cold water were flung over him, and he was made to continue, death coming after a very few days of this treatment as a longed-for release. Many were sentenced to work for an hour and sleep for an hour, continuously, and although this does not sound as severe a punishment as some, it took its toll of lives and broken nerves.

In that time of strain and repeated frustration, one of the few bright moments that we were permitted to enjoy was assisting at the departure of the transport trains. Under the dim and sombre arches of the Wilson Station we would meet about eleven o'clock at night, and, inquiring our way from officials, eventually arrive at the platform, guarded by police patrols, where the *émigrés* were gathering after an exhaustive search of their baggage and papers had been made. Each carried what worldly possessions were permitted to be taken into the new life. Some of them were gay with the warmth of adventure in their hearts, while others wept

quietly for the sadness of the past and the dimness of the future. No noise of any sort was allowed, so that they could not sing to keep up their courage, or shout last good-byes to their friends, and it was in short breathless gasps that this train of shadows responded to a whisper of "Three cheers for the English ladies!" Then "*Ein Tag*" they muttered, and "*Freundschaft und Freiheit!*" as with hands raised in salute they faded away into the darkness to Poland and to the sea.

They were the lucky ones; others had to search for more difficult ways out. *Illegal* was a word that we heard many times a day from the hundreds who lurked in cellars, or crowded ten and twelve into a single room, men, women, and children together, waiting for a chance to elude the vigilance of the police. Often their only hope of a meal was at one of the underground soup kitchens opened by the charitable, where women and men in fur coats could be seen hungrily jostling the outcasts in rags for possession of a plate of vegetable stew.

Every now and then familiar faces disappeared from their haunts, and we were met by significant silence when we inquired for them. But it was not for nothing that collections of clothes and money were being made through the office, and presently a letter would arrive with a Polish or Rumanian postmark, and we knew that yet another had ventured and

made good, although there were always some who went into silence and whose fate, without documents of any sort, we could only surmise. Abuses sprang up everywhere; for some landlords took the opportunity of raising the rents of their miserable apartments to extortionate heights, knowing that their unfortunate tenants would be forced to pay—somehow—or else run the chance of falling into the hands of the police if they risked a change of lodging and could not produce their identity cards.

Then there were the small and unscrupulous lawyers who flourished on the sale of forged permits, passports, and visas at exorbitant prices: and they had to be discovered, forced into the open, and, if possible, made to disgorge their gains. Agents, too, came from abroad with offers of land to be taken up by settlers; and it seemed like the story of 'Martin Chuzzlewit' all over again, when later we received letters from those who had fallen into the net and gone out to find that their property was in an unhealthy swamp or a barren desert. "Tell the others not to be lured out here," wrote one man; "better for them to die in a German prison than to perish in this foreign land without hope."

One morning at the office I had just disposed of a "*Mischling*" (half Jew and half Aryan) from Buda-Pesth, a good-looking boy, who apparently thought that a stroke of my pen could

provide him with a lucrative post as fashion designer on a London paper, when glancing up I found that the next applicant, an elderly country-woman, was already waiting her turn. Wide honest eyes set in a weather-beaten wrinkled face gave me back look for look, and as I listened to her quietly told story I felt that it should be recorded. "Take this down," I said to my efficient secretary, and she tapped out briskly on her typewriter: "The applicant has had all her property, consisting of two farms with lands and buildings in Sudetenland, taken from her by the Nazis, all her teeth have been knocked out, she has been beaten and both knees have been dislocated. She wishes it to be certified here that her age is fifty, not seventy, and that she is capable of any sort of work on a farm."

I looked at the old woman thoughtfully. The soldiers who had so cruelly mishandled her must have been mere boys, but the memory of their own mothers had not deterred them from their brutality; and her only crime had been that she had several times lent one of her outlying barns for political meetings in which she was not in the least interested. She had a permit to work on a dairy-farm in Scotland, but her appearance had caused the emigration officer, very rightly, to question her age. We set the telegraph wires in motion and confirmed her statements, and got a reply from her future

employer on the Moor of Rannoch to say that everything would be all right and she could come across as soon as possible. Her gratitude was pitiful to see; but alas, she was one of those for whom help had come too late. Hitler interfered with her life again before she had time to get off on the next transport train, and she disappeared, as did so many other unfortunates, no one knew where. Those steady eyes with their unquenchable spark of humour and that kindly old face are memories that I would give a very great deal to forget.

Sometimes our work took us up to the British Consulate, where day after day the over-worked officials had to deal with problems arising from demands for permits to enter Britain or one of her colonies. For hours on end the applicants stood penned, waiting their turn to be dealt with, all their hopes fixed on obtaining the flimsy sheet of paper which would stand between them and very probable death.

Jewellery could be bought at this time for practically nothing, and foreign cheques were at a premium, so busy were the dealers on the Black Bourse, who carried on their international activities from Holland. The acuteness of the political situation could always be gauged correctly by the rise and fall of this underground exchange.

Going over one week-end to Brno on business for the office,

I found that owing to its proximity to the German border, Nazis there were openly boasting that Hitler would take the town before long, and the cry of "Heil the sixth" was frequently heard, though the actual date was changed several times before the end. I was taken out to visit a Jewish camp, where five hundred refugees from No-man's-land were housed in a disused leather factory. It was the feast of Esther and Ahasuerus, and a play was being staged for that night by these cultured and artistic people, who had constructed ingenious scenery and drop curtains out of next to nothing. A group of young mechanics came up to chat and to hear news of the outside world from us. They were all going to take the desperate chance, the following week, of trying to reach Palestine illegally, and we could only wish them success and help with some clothing and other necessities for their journey. The dormitories provided sleeping accommodation far in excess of the floor space, by means of tiers of straw-covered shelves which formed bunks. I saw casks of herrings and quantities of tinned stuffs in their storeroom, labelled with the names of well-known English firms, which had been sent out to them by Britain.

At the end of February I took a few days' holiday with friends at their castle in the Sudetenland, and heard how for the last two or three years the thick-headed and dis-

contented peasants of the *Gebiet* had been lured into Germany at harvest-time and had been paid attractively high wages for their work. Part of their money was deducted and sent direct to their families every month, so that their one idea was a speedy union with this paternally munificent Third Reich. Since Munich, however, the rate of pay had steadily fallen, and they were now awakening to the fact of their exploitation and were filled with keen regrets that they had not been satisfied with the slowly improving conditions of life under the Republic.

My host was interested in the news I brought that work on Hitler's new road across Czechoslovakia to Vienna had ceased abruptly, and he thought that this augured little good.

He was right; for on my return to Prague I found that political affairs were rapidly gathering momentum. Slovakia, flattered and deceived, appeared to be following in the steps of the Sudetenland, Germany as usual manipulating the situation with a technique perfected by long practice. Tension rose so high that on the night of the 14th March the opera chosen to be presented at the Gala Performance in aid of the Red Cross, Smetana's "*Libushé*," had to be changed, in case the patriotism of the Czech people should burst all bounds as they watched the story unfolding, which set out the triumphant development of their

race and which culminated in its prophetic and dazzling future. Another of the composer's works, "Rusalka," was substituted, although into this also might be read symbolism. The beautiful water-sprite loving a mortal, but betrayed by him in her hour of need surely suggested Czechoslovakia and the treatment meted out to her by her friends.

It was a wintry night, and after my cold drive I found the warmth and brilliance of the National Theatre very welcome as I followed my host and hostess to their box.

When I look back now on those hours of glittering colour and beautiful music, the two seem to have been welded together so as to form a lovely and fitting swan-song for the doomed Republic.

Rarely had I experienced an atmosphere so tense and electric. In the intervals the men in their uniforms and the smartly dressed women would suddenly suspend their laughter and chatter, as if they were listening for something from far away, and groups of officers talked in hushed voices as they paced up and down the foyer. When the curtain rose and the lights were lowered, one felt that the masks were off, and that eyes were staring grimly past the stage to the inexorable and fateful dénouement, which they felt was approaching.

Driving home at midnight we heard shouting on the Vaclavské Náměstí, where a few

isolated groups brawled noisily, the white stockings of the Nazi party being easily discernible in the lamp-light. Just a year ago I had been in Vienna and had seen the same emblems flaunting in the Graben, their increasing numbers preluding the swift and unbelievable Austrian *Anschluss*.

The end came here, too, with equal suddenness. Unknown to the vast majority of the people President Hacha had been summoned that night to Berlin, and at seven o'clock on the morning of the 15th March rank upon rank of German soldiers were tramping down the streets of Prague. A bitter wind blew snowflakes out of the sky, but the streets were dense with a sullen, silent crowd, through which I had to force a way to get to the office. Every now and then from the loudspeakers hanging from the trees that fringed the pavements came instructions to the people to keep calm, to go to their work or to their homes, to offer no resistance, and to be ready for the change-over of traffic from the left-hand side of the road to the right. And at intervals, interspersing these orders, came the slow, calm chords of music taken from Zizka's Hymn and which I had last heard with such sublime effect at the funeral of President Mazaryk: "Ye who are the Warriors of God, Fight on!"

Faces, stamped with incredulous horror, appeared at

the windows. "*Pfui! Die Deutschen!*" they screamed, and shutters were slammed and barred, as if that would help to keep out the invaders. I saw a young Jew, with a basket over his arm and streaming hair, running wildly down the road, followed by jeers and laughter and the thin hunting cry of "*Jude! Jude!*" It is a sound that once heard can never be forgotten; for it means that death is abroad and that the quarry is human. But open persecutions had not yet begun, and we were spared the agonies of Vienna.

Finally, the office was reached, and I found it packed with terrified humanity, for whom at the moment, heart-breaking though it was, we could do nothing. They had to be sent away, while we hurriedly packed, and filed or burned papers containing lists of names and addresses which must not fall into the hands of the Gestapo. The black iron stove in the corner roared and choked as we laboured until the last incriminating records disappeared, and we were free to go.

The heads of the committees still carried on their work magnificently, striving by every means in their power to facilitate the task of evacuation and to achieve the apparently impossible, but everything seemed to be crumbling before our eyes. Verily, the meek had been disinherited from the earth and made to hand over all that they loved most to those who set no value on the gift.

The days dragged on. Guns were mounted on the bridge-heads, and every now and then we came upon cordons of soldiers drawn around houses which were being searched. The tale of suicides mounted steadily, and the arrests of Communists, Freemasons, Jews, and other anti-Nazis in the first week numbered over ten thousand.

I got used to pushing past the sinister muzzles of machine-guns mounted on motor-bicycles in the narrow streets, as I went round paying bills and saying good-bye to friends, for it was no use remaining in Prague. The British Legation was daily besieged by hundreds of refugees, and one had to pass sadly through this crowd, stretching out desperate and beseeching hands for help, in order to enter the courtyard through the great iron doors, which opened only to a British passport. Inside were several English journalists, who, forbidden ever to return to Germany, had awakened on the 15th March to find themselves in the heart of the Reich, and were therefore forced to seek sanctuary. Hourly the planes screamed, droned, and swooped over the city, part of the German technique for inducing fear, and I little thought as I watched them that within six months '*Hermann's Vögel*' would be trying their wings over England. The malignant scarlet of the long narrow Swastika banners appeared reluctantly and sporadically, not, as one might have thought, with that triumphant

rush of joy to welcome the freedom and peace which one man said that he had brought to Central Europe. These flags had been one of Hitler's mistakes; for he never realised how bitterly the old Germany resented the disappearance of her beloved Imperial Standard.

A letter received just then from a friend in Würtemberg hailed this victory without a blow as '*fabelhaft*' and rejoiced in the downfall of the '*schrecklichen und grausamen Czechen*,' which only showed how penetrating and powerful had been Goebbels' persistent propaganda; for a year ago she had been a broadminded woman, with a sane outlook on international affairs.

"I never thought that Prague would be so beautiful," said the untravelled Führer as he sat at a window of the Hradčany and looked down on the dreaming city; but that other beauty of the hidden things of the spirit, courage, truth, mercy, and peace, he was utterly unable to perceive.

We talked to the lads of the German Army, and they were frankly puzzled. "Where is the Revolution?" they asked. "Where are the burning villages and the Red outrages? We were brought down here by forced marches to rescue Czechoslovakia from the clutches of Communism, and we find a happy, peaceful country, more prosperous than our own. Perhaps the conflagrations and the unrest are farther south?"

They revelled in the cakes, cream, and butter that filled the confectioners' windows, and they thronged the shops in the old town to buy presents of linen and woollen goods to send back to their friends in Germany.

The Praguers were there too; for they foresaw that when present supplies were exhausted, there was little hope of goods of similar quality taking their place. So great was the rush that the shopkeepers had to close their doors at intervals throughout the day to enable them to cope with their crowds of customers. The troops had been taught Czech phrases of greeting, which they used on every occasion, and they were tactful and considerate in the streets. Their officers also were eager to be of service, offering seats in hotel lounges with exaggerated politeness, and clicking their heels together as they bowed and opened doors; perhaps they really believed in their mission, and thought that they would be welcomed by the people as their deliverers.

One afternoon I came upon a photograph being taken in a side street, of soldiers handing out food to a few ragged-looking but reluctant beggars. Perhaps this would go back to Berlin with the caption: "The Army of Liberation feeds starving Czechs." "And," as my companion bitterly remarked, "they are only giving away the stuff which they brought with them, because what they get here is so infinitely preferable."

There was a rumour that the

men had Bulgarian grammars in their knapsacks, and as we heard the lorries rumbling through the city, night after night, we imagined that the next blow would be struck in that country. But the transports, we learned, were going north, filled with munitions, equipment, meat, fats, flour, iron, and the rolls of barbed wire for entanglements, known as 'Spanish riders,' all loot, taken from the stricken country.

Returning late one evening to my hotel, I found two political refugees waiting to see me. While we sat over coffee a knock came at my door, and the manager asked if he could speak to me for a moment. With many apologies he inquired whether I would leave in an hour's time. "Because of my work?" I asked, thinking that he objected to my visitors. But no, it was orders from the German G.H.Q., who had commandeered the whole hotel. After telephoning vainly round Prague to try and find a room in the overcrowded town, I could only put my suitcases on a taxi and drive off to some Czech friends for advice on where I should go. They took me into their lovely flat, and I stayed with them until the German pressure lessened and I was able to go back to my hotel.

We spent hours listening to the radio. Would England declare war? What was the reaction in Italy? How did the Balkans stand, and could the storm that must eventually

engulf the whole world really be held off much longer? "Why did I not bring up my sons to be gangsters?" asked my hostess bitterly, "for everything that I have spent my life in teaching them is being trampled underfoot. Stay with us; do not go away, for this is now a country and a house of the dead. But you still live and can exercise your free will, and to feel that gives us comfort and a measure of hope."

The days that I spent under that roof formed an experience that I would not have forgone. Everything that could be gathered from the ruin of their own life and ideals was offered selflessly to others by these loyal friends.

It was they who discovered which of the Gestapo men, uniformed now and with their skull and crossbones badge, were open to bribes and they eagerly passed this knowledge on to hunted men. They learned first of the deserted coal-shaft in Slovakia which passed beneath the Polish frontier, and helped to finance little groups ready to face the risks which this way of escape offered. They gave asylum to others besides myself and arranged for the sale of pictures, jewels, and furniture for their penniless owners. I hope that I may be spared long enough to see them once more enjoying the blessing of leading their lives, serene and unafraid, in a stable world.

I heard from them stories

of the German entry. Of the Czech who rushed into the road as the troops advanced to protest against the outrage, and who, unable to hold up their march, fell crushed beneath the tanks. Of the orders given to the Nazis inside Prague to arrive in 'Sauhaufen' fashion and to scatter themselves through the crowds, so that their numbers and shouts of welcome might appear greater. I heard of the endless mechanical breakdowns that had occurred of armoured cars and waggons, and of the poor quality of the men's equipment. "Their boots," my host said briefly, "are not well." I heard of the first victory parade, which the inhabitants refused to attend, and on which the Czech running commentary, broadcast to them in their homes, was full of so many sly innuendoes and double meanings that it gave their first laughter back to the stricken people.

The same thing happened in the evenings in the cafés, where Czech and German soldiers fraternised and exchanged songs, the Germans never guessing that the cheerful tunes with the outlandish words contained ribald and jocular references to themselves and to their Führer.

The peasants of the countryside were uneasy. Orders went out that they were to behave themselves quietly and to make no protests, and for a week or two all went well. Then deputations began to arrive at the Ministry for Home Affairs.

"We have been very good," their spokesman said; "we have done everything that you asked us to do. Now will you please tell the Germans to go away again? We like it better without them." My old friend, the Mayor of X—, even set out for Berlin to try and make that man Hitler see sense. It was quite ridiculous, he argued, that the people of his department, who were Czechs of the Czechs and who for centuries had guarded the frontier against the Germans, should now pass under their dominion.

In the dawn of that first snowy morning a German advance-guard on motor-bicycles came through an out-of-the-way village, and skidding round a sharp corner, fell from their machines, and lay prone, too stiff and frozen to remount. The peasants, all unaware of who they were or what was their object, ran out of their houses, with bowls of hot soup and wine to revive them, and then sped them on their way with cheerful words.

We visited a cluster of farms, and found that there the inhabitants had proved themselves more sophisticated. "When we heard of the invasion," they told us, "we remembered the song handed down to us from the days of the Brandenburgers:—

'When the soldiers all came
marching past,
Of our pigs and geese we saw
the last,'

and so we marketed most of

our stock and had a grand feast off the remainder."

It was sad to encounter members of the sturdy little Czech Army, all disarmed, the officers still in uniform, but with empty sword-slugs and holsters. One of them told me that he thought that he and his men must have been the last to surrender to the invaders. They had been out for weeks in the mountains on ski-ing manoeuvres, far in the wilds of Slovakia, with no radio near them, and were probably the most surprised men in Europe when they returned to civilisation and found that their world had gone up in flames.

I still received visits from distraught refugees. Some threatened to commit suicide before my eyes—bringing the wherewithal in their handbags to carry out the project—if I did not arrange to get them out of the country at once. Others begged me, equally in vain, to take their children to England, or to fill my luggage with the valuables which they were now forbidden to send abroad. There were also the political suspects who dared not leave their houses, and wished letters or jewellery conveyed to friends, and I found myself one evening, my pockets bulging with pearls and diamonds, forced to walk down the crowded Pílikopy, wedged dramatically between two S.S. men, on my way to deliver the packets at their destination. Only when I decided that the time had

come to return to England did I discover that it was impossible for me to buy a ticket or to leave the country without the consent of the Gestapo. I had to hand over my passport with my application, and the four days which I spent without it were certainly not the pleasantest that I have experienced. When my permission did come through, I found that all the trains *via* Holland were booked up, but eventually I heard that there were still tickets for the route over Switzerland.

On my last evening I passed through the old square as the golden clock on the Town Hall struck midnight. There in front of the most sacred spot in Prague, where burns the lamp to the Unknown Soldier, where handfuls of soil from countries where the Legionaries fought and died, are locked behind the wall, and where the tablet commemorating the martyrs of 1681 is set, a silent crowd could generally be found, pressing near to pray and to place their tribute of bright spring flowers on the flagstones before the shrine. But at that hour a peasant woman, in her lovely embroidered scarlet dress, was keeping vigil alone. Tears streamed down her face, and her hands were raised in bewildered supplication, while the moonlight dappled the banks of blossoms and the Swastika flag, which had been placed there with great pomp and ceremony by a German general the day before. It seemed incredible that men, even of

such an obscure mentality, could have conceived the insult of inflicting this last refinement of cruelty on the tortured soul of a brave people.

The day that I left, I was thankful to find that my fears of having to stand for hours in a packed train were not to be realised. The station was comparatively empty, and I found a seat without much difficulty. Then came the farewells to the sad little group of friends who had come to see me off, and whom I would gladly have taken with me if it had been humanly possible. I approached the old Czech frontier with some misgiving, but the officials gave but a cursory glance at my documents and I began to breathe more freely.

At Stuttgart I was joined in my compartment by a German, who started conversation. He was a manufacturer and came over to England twice every month on business. My replies to his cautious questions about Prague were blunt and truthful, and finally I said: "Tell me, why did your Führer break his word and march into Bohemia?" He fidgeted uneasily and then exploded: "What else could he do? Was it not a country full of red-hot Communism? Look at the map. Did it not stick

into our side, like a festering splinter?"

At last Switzerland and freedom. Never before had I really valued democracy, or even thought very much about it. I had just taken that particular form of Government for granted, as so many other people do, proud to be British, without analysing my reasons very closely, or imagining what life would be like under any other system than our own. But now that I had seen the hell that one man could make, where thousands had been reduced to such terror that they were shorn of every shred of human decency and dignity, I felt that no sacrifice could be too great to preserve our country from a like degradation. I looked across to the land that I had left, where the Nazis were still busy carving their own murky memorial. Not in perishable wood or stone, but in the indestructible pages of history, so that it will stand as an indictment of themselves and of their methods long after the nations whom they sought to destroy have shaken off their yoke and risen at last to enjoy the heritage which must assuredly be theirs—Liberty and Peace in the Brotherhood of Man.

DOINGS AT MALDONADO.

BY SHALIMAR.

I.

CAPTAIN CHARLES BENSON of the Liverpool barque *Talca* was, by his own confession, the world's worst business man. He could handle or sail a ship with anybody, but when it came to handling money he wilted and his liking for his job almost reached vanishing point. He avoided business as much as possible and was thoroughly unhappy when it came his way; so when he sailed into Valparaiso sixty-two days out from the Lizard—the record passage of the year—his exultation quickly evaporated when he found that his agent, whose name had been given him before he left home, was merely a sort of office boy or guide, who assisted him to enter his ship, showed him the way round the various offices, and left him to transact the business. To make matters worse, the usual letter of instructions from his owners had not arrived; the trouble being that the owners, not expecting quite such a swift passage, had only posted it a week before the *Talca* actually arrived at Valparaiso.

To most shipmasters, with a clutching hand for every dollar that came within reach, the situation would have been intriguing; but poor Charles

fretted over it. His outward cargo was "South Shields general"—coke, small coal, bricks, and fireclay—and the charterers had the option of ordering him to a second port in Chile provided there was enough of the outward cargo for that port to ballast the vessel to his satisfaction. When informed of the amount he had to admit that he was satisfied, and was then told that the port was Maldonado.

"Where on earth is that?" he asked.

The agent for the charterers shrugged his shoulders.

"South of Iquique," he said.

"Damn it, south of Iquique means anywhere between Iquique and Valparaiso, and that's a stretch of eight hundred miles," Captain Benson cried.

The agent went out to make further inquiries, and returned with the information that Maldonado lay between Iquique and Antofagasta.

"That narrows it a bit, but it's still pretty indefinite," the captain said. "However, it'll be on the chart."

But it was not on the chart, and his copy of the *South America Pilot*, Part III., which was considerably out of date, made no reference to it. In-

quiries at various places, including the back-parlour of the ship-chandlers, failed to locate it definitely. It quickly became evident, however, that though nobody seemed to know the exact whereabouts of Maldonado, many people were aware of its existence. As soon as it became known on the waterfront that the *Talca* was going there cargo, at a slightly smaller freight than that obtained by the few coasting steamers that called, came on offer. Captain Benson found he could fill his ship up with general cargo—hay, flour, and cases of beer. This unexpected intermediate freight was very much to his owner's advantage, and, of course, he could not dream of refusing it; though it meant that he would have to handle considerable sums of money. The freight was payable in Chilean currency on his signing bills of lading, and should have been forwarded to his owners; but the idea of visiting a bank to buy drafts every time he received a small sum was intolerable. In the end he decided to keep the money on board and forward it in a lump sum from Iquique, which was to be his loading port for home. He would get a better rate of exchange from there, he was advised.

A week before his approximate sailing date he was still ignorant of the exact locality of Maldonado, and was thinking of trying the Chilean Navy, when an old schoolmate and friend—chief officer in one of

the coasting steamers of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company—paid him a visit on board the *Talca* one evening.

"Maldonado," the friend said. "Yes, I've been there, but not for two or three years. The P.S.N.C. gave it up; we leave it to the C.S.A. de V., the Chilean company which carries most of the stuff for the mining company that owns the port. It's a one-horse port, if ever there was one. The mines are about thirty miles inland. When I was there last there was nothing at the port but the company's office close to the pier, a repair shop for the railway, a store—oh! founded, by the way, by an old friend of ours—and a whole lot of miserable-looking shacks. Get out your chart and I'll mark it for you."

The chart, a small-scale one, was produced and spread on the cabin table.

"Let's see; where's Tocopilla? It's north of that," the friend said. "Ah! here we are. Do you see that little indentation in the coastline? That's your port."

"But how am I going to find it?" Captain Benson asked. "There's nothing much in the way of landmarks on this chart."

"You'll find it easy enough, so long as you don't go looking for it in the dark and run past it. Remember you've got to allow for a three-knot current setting up the coast, in addition to the prevailing wind. If you get to leeward of it, you'll

have a hell of a time trying to beat back. It might take you a week. Still, you shouldn't miss it, for there are several very distinctive landmarks. A couple of miles south of the entrance there are high rocks covered with guano; very conspicuous, they shine like salt. Then right at the back of the bay, and about twelve miles inland, there's a three thousand feet mountain that has the appearance of a cone with the top cut off. It stands out very clearly above the neighbouring heights. When you get it on a north-east bearing stand in for it and you'll pick up the crane on the end of the pier just showing through the entrance to the harbour."

"Is the port as easy to enter?"

"Oh, good Lord! no; especially with a windbag. The entrance looks wide, but it isn't; the navigable channel is just a little over a cable broad. It's steep-to on the starboard hand as you go in; on the other side there's a dangerous reef. A full-rigged ship went up on it a few years ago, and what's left of her is there yet. There used to be a buoy on the outer end of the reef, but you don't need it. Outside the line of white breakers there's a fringe of light-green shallow water, which shows up very clearly alongside the dark blue of the deeper water."

"Doesn't sound very pleasant," said Captain Benson, who was secretly rather pleased.

ferreting out new places where skill in seamanship and pilotage was required interested him—anything rather than business.

"It isn't exactly pleasant, Charles; and the dregs of the current farther off-shore set across the channel on to the reef. At times there's a devil of a tide-rip, too; almost half-way through the channel. The wind should be all right, the south-east trade. It's a soldier's wind—abeam both going in and coming out; but, of course, it also tends to set you on to the reef, so you've got to hug the rocks to starboard when entering. Hold on, though; I've heard that there's a tug-boat there now, but that's only coast gossip, and she may only be used for towing barges. Anything else?"

"Is there plenty of room inside?"

"Enough for a dozen ships, and there's plenty of time to shorten sail after you clear the narrow entrance. The depth decreases from twenty odd fathoms in the entrance to five fathoms near the shore. Sand and shell bottom. The best anchorage is in twelve fathoms, about two cables off the pier. I'm dry with talking, but before you give me a drink I'll make a sketch of the harbour for you."

The sketch was finished and drinks were forthcoming.

"It sounds a lousy sort of a place, and I'll probably be there for some time," the captain remarked ruefully.

"No; there are plenty of

lighters and they give you quick despatch. The company is under German management. And now for the bloke who started the store. Do you remember Teddy Cairns who was in the *Conway* with us?"

"Yes, rather; he stroked the boat against the *Worcester*—and walloped me in the final of the heavyweights."

"That's him, and it was he who opened the store. He had bad luck. He was chief officer of a big tramp that stranded on Los Farrallones, down the coast a bit. He was on watch when she went up, and the court of inquiry suspended his master's certificate for a year. That

fed him up with the sea, so hearing about this new port of Maldonado he went up there and opened a general store. He's got a good job now, though; a Danish officer in the C.S.A. de V. told me he had been made pier-master. Nice fellow, Teddy, and very cheery. He'll be good company for you."

Eight days later the *Talca*, having discharged half her inward cargo and loaded up again till she was down to her marks, left Valparaiso and stood away to the north. Her hold was full of bales, bags, and cases; and the captain's safe was full of Chilean dollars.

II.

For five days the *Talca* sailed steadily northward, with the faint outline of the coast, or the mountains behind, rarely out of view. At two o'clock one morning Captain Benson reckoned he had almost run his distance, so he brought the barque to. With the mainyards backed and head reaching off-shore at the rate of a knot, she lay waiting quietly for the dawn. The soft trade wind droned through the rigging, thrusting her over a few degrees then allowing her to come almost upright, so that her mastheads lazily traced small arcs against the background of the high stars. Barefooted men moved noiselessly about the deck, their whispered conversation having that quality of

tenseness which pervades a vessel waiting for daylight to make a landfall. The characteristic noiselessness of a sailing vessel with just sufficient wind to keep her sails quiet was broken by the thundering of distant surf on a coast that is hammered continuously by the swell rolling in from the Pacific.

Dawn came, and daylight followed swiftly. From the poop the captain eagerly scanned the shore through his long telescope. He saw a broken, rocky coast backed by a sandy plain that extended out to the foothills, miles away. Some of the rocks were splashed with white and yellow patches of guano, but he could see nothing that looked in the

least like glistening white salt. The mountains behind were hidden by a horizontal layer of cloud, so it was impossible to tell whether one of them was shaped like a cone with the top cut off. The captain was in a dilemma. If, in following his friend's advice, he had stopped his ship too soon, the remedy was simple: he had only to square away and sail along the coast till he picked up one of the landmarks. If, on the other hand, the favourable current had been much stronger than he had allowed for and he had already drifted past his port in the darkness, every mile made to the north would add hours to the time he would take to beat back. In the sameness of the land there was no guide, yet the coastline was almost imperceptibly altering its appearance as the barque drifted bodily northward. Usually imperturbable, Captain Benson was in a fever of uncertainty; at one moment he would decide that he was not yet far enough north, at the next he would be in despair at the idea that he was already far past his port. At one moment his telescope was pointing down the coast, at the next it was pointing up it. The layer of cloud still lay obstinately over the high hills, and eventually it was the changing coastline that, without warning, brought instantaneous relief. The straight length of rocky shore trending away to the north-west was terminated abruptly by a high

bluff, beyond which no further coast could be seen. During one of the captain's sweeps to the north a vivid white patch leapt into the lens of his telescope. It was right at the tip of the bluff, which slowly opened to the southward to expose the guano-covered rocks. There they were, as white as driven snow; as conspicuous as they had been described.

"Hard up the helm! square the mainyards!" Captain Benson shouted confidently.

A few minutes later his confidence was reinforced. The cloud cleared from the hills and the cone-shaped mountain stood out clearly. The *Talca* was headed in for it, bringing the wind on to the starboard beam. The indentation that was the harbour of Maldonado lay right in front of her questing jib-boom. There was the reef, too, with the white surf breaking on it; and a few minutes later the crane on the end of the pier showed up. Easy, after all, the captain thought—his earlier worries forgotten; and to make it still easier smoke appeared in the entrance. The steam tug was coming out.

She was not exactly an ocean-going tug, though she had a towing-hook; in all probability her main use would be for towing lighters. Likely she would do all that was required of her, though, and once she was towing ahead it should only be necessary to steer into her wake. There was enough wind to drive the *Talca* along at six knots, and as the tug

did not look a powerful one, Captain Benson did not shorten sail at her approach. The wind being a little abaft the beam, and therefore fair, he decided to keep all his canvas set; at anyrate till he had passed through the entrance. That would, at least, ease the strain on the tug, which in the meantime had made a wide sweep and ranged up on the lee quarter. Her Chilean captain hailed the poop.

"Good morning, *capitan*; throw me a heaving-line for my rope," he shouted.

"Good morning; not quite so fast," Captain Benson replied. "How much to take me to an anchorage?"

The Chilean shrugged his shoulders in a deprecatory manner, as if to suggest that such matters were not mentioned between gentlemen.

"No my business, *capitan*; the company make de fixed charge," he said.

"All right!" Captain Benson, much relieved, for he hated bargaining with tug-boat skippers, agreed. "Mr Smith, give the tug-boat a heaving-line, then haul his tow-rope on board," he shouted to the mate.

The heaving-line, accurately thrown by one of the seamen, rattled on the tug's deck, and was bent on to a coir spring which was hauled on to the *Talca's* forecandle-head.

"Make dat well fast, Mr Mate," the Chilean cried.

"All fast," the mate reported a couple of minutes later.

The tug moved ahead slowly.

The spring was a short one and was attached to a wire hawser led over the tug's towing-arch to the hook, to which the end of it was secured. To men accustomed to deep-sea towage the scope of the combined tow-line was very short; but, skimpy though it was, the tug going at full speed did little more than raise the bight of it out of the water. Captain Benson doubted if the towing had increased his vessel's speed by more than a knot. He did not worry, however. The tug would at least serve as a guide, and would be handy to swing the barque head to wind when they came to the anchorage.

Now the panorama of the entrance, the bay, and the port itself was revealed, bathed in brilliant sunshine. In the foreground was the narrow blue channel into the broad, landlocked harbour; the reef on one side of the channel, with the remains of a wrecked vessel sticking up out of the green water that fringed it; the sheer, steep-to rocks on the other side. Two miles beyond was a cluster of houses and huts, and the long pier with lighters lying on both sides of it. The *Talca* was drawing up to the entrance; the tug had just reached it, and Captain Benson, remembering about the dregs of the current setting across it, noted with uneasiness that her skipper was keeping to the middle of it. A second later he saw by the way the reef was altering its bearing against

the background of the hills, that his ship was sagging steadily toward it, though her helm was down.

"Mr Smith," he shouted sharply to the mate, who was standing by the anchor on the forecastle-head, "tell that fellow in the tug to steer more to starboard."

The mate yelled at the tug, but from the poop her skipper's reply was inaudible. He had, however, either not understood the order—and an instruction from the vessel towed to the tug is an order—or wilfully disobeyed it, for he still stood straight up the middle of the channel. A moment later a tide-rip, which had missed the tug, with its shallower draft, struck the *Talca* on the starboard bow and sent her swerving violently to port. Owing to her position she had little room to recover. She made straight for the wreck on the edge of the reef, and as she paid off she brought the wind more abaft the beam and gathered greater speed. She dragged the tug with her; now broad off on the starboard bow it was powerless to stop her wayward rush, though its engines were working at their highest power. But a minute before the barque had been sailing serenely into the bay; now the grim shadow of immediate disaster lay heavily over her. To her hands, startled almost into panic by the suddenness of the emergency, it seemed as if nothing could save her, and some were already

bracing themselves against the shock of stranding. But from the poop, where he stood cool and alert, Captain Benson had seen the tide-rip and anticipated the swerve. He knew what to do; he knew how to do it. Without a second of hesitation he initiated as fine a feat of seamanship as had been seen on that coast.

"Cut away the tow-rope!" he roared, and his voice rang all over the ship. "All hands swing the yards round! A watch to each mast, and let the lee braces rip! Lively, men, lively!"

A blow from the carpenter's axe severed the straining hawser. In an instant the main-deck was the scene of high action. Men rushed to their stations; ropes went whirring out through blocks; above the noise of flapping canvas overhead there rose the excited shouts of men hauling frantically on braces. Sea-birds, rising in a great flock from the reef, added to the tumult; they circled about the yard-arms and swooped between the masts; their shrill cries even drowned the working shouts of the crew. Till the yards came square it was a dead drag on the braces; then the leeches of the sails fluttered and the great yards swung on to the starboard backstays of their own accord. From the poop it seemed as if the jagged iron frames of the wreck were almost under the bowsprit; but the captain, looking down at the water, saw that the way was off his ship. He had not

felt the jar of stranding. He hoped she had not stranded, but could not tell. Then he saw bubbles floating forward. She had gathered sternway. The wind blowing directly against the forward surfaces of the sails had acted first as a brake, then as a propellant; it pressed the barque backward.

"Helm amidships! hard over the other way!" the captain ordered.

The stern was pointing straight at a ledge which jutted seaward from the rocks on the starboard side of the channel, but as the sternway increased it swung clear. The rudder was brought amidships again. Steering almost as well going astern, under her reversed helm, as she did when going ahead, the fine-lined barque made a beautiful sternboard straight out to sea—so beautiful that it seemed a pity there were no witnesses save the seagulls hovering over the rocks. The men on the tug did not see it; they were too busy hauling in the severed tow-rope. Captain Benson let his vessel run over a mile seaward before he had the foreyards hauled round and the sails on the foremast filled again. The barque lay almost stopped, waiting for the tug to get out of the fairway. The broken end of the rope passed in over her counter; she was turned round and headed once more for the *Talca*. She came up abeam just as the mainyards had been hauled round, and the barque gathered headway.

"What for you cut my

rope?" the Chilean skipper, who seemed to be quivering with indignation, shouted.

"Cut your rope! I'd like to cut your damned throat!" Captain Benson roared. "Get out of the way, and stop out; I never want to see you again."

A torrent of Spanish oaths flooded the tug's wheel-house. The skipper shouted a petulant order down the voice-pipe to the engine-room, and the tug shot off at full speed toward the harbour. The *Talca* followed, with the best helmsman in the ship at her wheel.

"I want you to shave those rocks to starboard," Captain Benson told him.

"Aye, aye, sir."

The *Talca* neared the entrance; her starboard rail lined with men, staring apprehensively at the rocks which seemed all too near.

"Luff a little more, my lad. Don't be frightened; you can go a bit closer than that," the captain said quietly. "A hand to the lee wheel."

The barque, her tall pillars of canvas heeling lightly to the breeze, passed the ledge and entered the channel. So close was she to the steep-to rocks that the kelp from their bases seemed to reach out and try to touch her side. The lower sails were blanketed, and hung straight up and down the masts, but with only slightly reduced speed she stood on. A little more than half-way through they could see the overfall of the tide-rip. Her bow entered it and again she

swerved violently to port across the channel.

"Hard down the helm!" Captain Benson cried.

The two men at the wheel spun it till it was over, and held it there. Shuddering like a maddened colt in the strong water of the rip the *Talca* fought for her head. Still she sheered across the channel in the direction of the reef; but this time she had room to recover. Her rudder mastered her; the swing was checked, and she swerved back the other way towards the rocks.

"Midship! meet her! hard up!"

The return swing was also checked. A minute later she passed from the troubled, seething water of the rip and glided into the undisturbed bay. It was time to shorten sail. Buntlines and clewlines were manned. The canvas was left to hang fluttering in the gear. Under lower topsails, with a seaman heaving the hand-lead, she sailed in quietly to within two cables of the pier, rounded into the wind, and anchored.

III.

After a bath and breakfast Captain Benson had leisure to inspect Maldonado from his poop. A one-horse port, his friend had called it, and the description seemed to fit the town. To seaward it was somewhat different. The main feature was the long pier which jutted out from a railway siding, and had a score of lighters lying alongside it. The pier was clean and tidy, the lighters trim and well cared for. From the siding the railway, a broad-gauge one with a double track, ran across a sandy plain to the distant foothills. There was sand everywhere; not a tree, bush, or blade of grass could be seen. The captain could not see a single road; the wooden buildings and shacks had been dumped down on the bare sand. Nobody from the shore

came near the barque, so after his mid-day meal he ordered his gig to be lowered. He had to find someone to whom he could give notice of readiness to discharge. Already he had decided that Maldonado was not the sort of place that would grow on him, and was hoping for a quick discharge. There seemed to be nothing against it; for it was unlikely that there would be surf days—the bane of the coast—in that quiet harbour.

Since daybreak that day much had happened, and he had forgotten that he had a friend in the port till he was on his way down the accommodation ladder. As the gig, manned by five apprentices, approached the pier he searched along it for a uniformed pier-master. Instead he saw the Chilean skipper of the tug, who scowled at him,

turned on his heel, and walked away. The landing ladder was close to the inshore end of the pier; farther out labourers were stacking bags of ore under the superintendence of a foreman who appeared to be a European. Bent on making inquiries, Captain Benson got on to the pier and approached the workers, then stopped dead in his tracks. Surely the haggard, slovenly, shoddy individual who stood before him with his face half averted could not be the Teddy Cairns who rowed stroke against the *Worcester*. It was Teddy Cairns, but, heavens! degenerated into a disreputable-looking beachcomber. He was unshaven; on his head was a tattered sombrero; his shirt was without a collar, his jacket and trousers were of the cheapest of dungaree. His Blucher boots were dull and dirty, and looked as if they had never known polish. Captain Benson went up to him with extended hand.

"Hullo, Teddy," he cried brightly.

The man addressed shot a startled look at him, then made to turn away.

"I don't think I know you," he said over his shoulder.

But Benson was not having any of that. He seized Teddy by the shoulders, swung him round, and grasped his hand.

"Oh, yes, you do," he said. "You must remember Charles Benson in the *Conway*."

"Captain Benson of the *Talca* now, I suppose," Cairns said somewhat bitterly.

"Now come off it, Teddy," Benson cried. "I'm damned glad to meet you again. I've got to do some business, if you will show me where to do it; then I'll come back and have a yarn about old times."

Cairns pointed listlessly to a one-storey building of the same type as the shacks in which the *lancheros* and *stevedores* lived, only larger. There were several of those large buildings, but the others appeared to be derelict.

"That's the office," he said. "You'll find the head clerk in it. He's down at the heel, like myself, but he speaks English."

"Right; I'll see you when I've finished with him."

The captain entered the office and looked round. The wooden walls were bare; the only furniture consisted of a desk, a table, three wooden chairs, a safe, and a telephone. A shabby-looking Chilean rose to meet him.

"Good morning," Captain Benson said. "I'm the master of the *Talca*. I've come to give notice that I am ready to discharge."

"Good morning, captain," the head clerk said, and made a graceful bow. "Welcome to our poor establishment. We do little business now; it is all transacted at the mine. Sit down while I report your readiness to discharge to the manager."

Up to a point the head clerk had the most charming telephone manner the captain had ever seen. He approached the

telephone and, before ringing the bell, made another elaborate bow—so elaborate, indeed, that it resembled a court curtsy—and said “*Señor*” most politely. As the subsequent conversation was in Spanish the captain understood very little of it save an occasional reference to bills of lading, the manifest, stores, and ballast. The talk over, the clerk hung up the receiver and shed his politeness. He spat vehemently, made a disgusted grimace at the telephone, and shouted, “Stinking *Gringo*; dam German swine!”

For the next hour the captain and the clerk discussed the manifest which the captain had brought with him; the amount of ballast to be put on board before the cargo was finally discharged; the supply of provisions and fresh water. There was ample fresh meat. It came down by train daily, the clerk said, and fresh water came from the vicinity of the mine through a pipe-line. It was very much nicer up there; they even grew vegetables, but the greedy pigs never sent any down. The manager hated everything at Maldonado and rarely visited it; he preferred to stay at the mine, and that, according to the clerk, was the only decent habit he had. As they spoke the wind freshened to half a gale; the doors and windows rattled and had to be closed. It became horribly stuffy in the office, and Captain Benson was glad to finish his business and get away.

He stepped outside to find

a scorching wind he could hardly face. Fine, burning sand filled his nose, mouth, and lungs, and seared his face, eyes, and hands. The atmosphere was hot, but it was not so much the heat that worried him—though that was bad enough. It was the driving sand. The air was full of fine sand and dust, and his soul was full of foreboding. The general misery of nature under such a poisonous affliction was overpowering. Good Lord! what an infernal place in which to live and work. If those sandstorms were of frequent occurrence they would go far to explain the listlessness and apathy, the general air of having almost completely lost his grip on life, that seemed to be characteristic of the Teddy Cairns he had met that afternoon.

He could not see very far through the driven sand, even when he suffered the pain caused by opening his eyes, but he struck the railway and stumbled along it till he came to the siding. From there it was only a step on to the pier. He made his way carefully along it, but missed the landing ladder and fetched up against the piled-up heap of bags of ore. There was no one on the pier, but in some lighters lying beside it the *lancheros* were sheltering under tarpaulins. This sort of thing was going to hamper the discharging of his cargo badly; the quick despatch he had hoped for was not likely to materialise. He

retraced his steps and found the gig tucked in snugly between two of the piles which supported the pier. When he pushed off he could not see his vessel, but fifty yards away from the pier the air became clearer and she loomed up.

They got off to the *Talca* to find her straining at her anchor. To guard against her dragging with the wind the mate had paid out another fifteen fathoms of cable. Even a quarter of a mile from the nearest land, as she was, the

poop was coated with fine particles of sand. The pier, the beach, and the town were completely obscured by thick swirling clouds of sand, and Captain Benson knew that somewhere in that inferno his old schoolmate—the only Briton in the place—was crouching miserably in a wretched shack. In a puzzled mood, and with a mind that was troubled, he went down to the comfortable cabin for a substantial supper. Already he felt he had been in Maldonado long enough.

IV.

Next morning the sun climbed over the hill-tops into a cloudless sky. A light breeze ruffled the surface of the harbour; it was a day to gladden the heart and raise the spirits. Lighters to take the cargo and a swarm of stevedores were off bright and early, and before very long discharging was in progress at all hatches. The lethargy prevailing at certain Chilean ports at that time did not obtain at Maldonado, mainly, Captain Benson suspected, owing to the efficiency of the German management. He felt cheerier and more confident of a quick despatch; and from a foreman stevedore, who could speak English, he learned that sandstorms were of infrequent occurrence, one a month being a fair average. It was most unfortunate that one should have occurred on the very first day of the captain's visit, the

stevedore said politely. One must not misjudge a fine port because of that.

After breakfast the captain was pulled ashore, and after a most discouraging hour of conversation—mainly monosyllabic on one side—he managed to pierce the armour of shy aloofness and reserve that Teddy Cairns had assumed. A further half-hour of earnest pleading and argument elicited a promise that his old schoolmate would come off to the ship for supper when the day's work was done.

"Now, it's a promise," he said earnestly.

"Yes," Cairns answered with reluctance.

"All right; I'll come and fetch you."

"No, don't bother; just send your gig. I wouldn't trouble you, but I can't get a boat after working hours."

At half-past six Cairns went

up the *Talca's* accommodation ladder, looking fairly presentable. True, the shiny blue serge suit he wore appeared to have not seen the light of day for years, but he had a collar and tie, and was freshly shaven. Captain Benson introduced him to the officers, and a cheery meal in the cabin followed. Afterwards in the captain's room, with their pipes going, Benson felt he could take some liberty with his guest.

"Look here, Teddy, you must be leading a hell of a life in this God-forsaken place," he said. "It's a wonder you haven't taken to drink."

"That's one thing I *have* avoided, thank God," Cairns answered; "but it *is* a hell of a life."

"Well, why don't you chuck it?"

"I can't."

"Why not? You can stand me speaking plainly. I know your certificate was suspended for a year, but that was some time ago. You can get it back now."

"I have got it back."

"All right; chuck it; this is no life for a white man. Surely going to sea is far better. I'll willingly give you a passage to Iquique, and you wouldn't have much trouble in getting a berth there."

"Many thanks, old man; but really I can't," Cairns said.

"But why not?" Captain Benson persisted.

After a moment of hesitation Cairns put his hand in his pocket, pulled out some waxen

disks of various shapes, colours, and sizes, and threw them on the table.

"These damned things keep me here," he said bitterly.

"Those things! What are they?"

"The company uses them for currency, and the company completely dominates Maldonado, which, of course, it owns. I didn't intend to talk about them, really I didn't. I just happen to have them in my pocket because, before I came off, I went into the store to get some cigarettes for the apprentices in the gig," Cairns said. "I don't want to spoil the evening by boring you with my trouble, anyhow," he added.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Teddy. Come on; it'll do you good to get it off your chest."

"All right, Charles, I'll tell you the whole yarn," Cairns exclaimed with a burst of candour. "I've had rotten luck ever since my certificate was suspended; and I had bad luck over that too, because the stranding was due to an error of judgment, not to negligence. Well, after the court of inquiry had given its verdict I met the mining company's agent down in Valpo. He was a decent chap and, I think, quite genuine. He told me of the opening up of this new port and said there wasn't a store in it. The people had to depend on the steamers that called for tobacco and all the odds and ends one finds in a general store at home. Perhaps,

naturally, I was thoroughly fed up with the sea, so, having some capital, I bought a lot of stuff in Valpo, brought it up here, and opened a store in the largest building I could get. Seeing this place as it is now you will think I was mad, that I hadn't a chance of even making a living, let alone a fortune; but three years ago it was entirely different. Maldonado was then the busiest end of the undertaking. Vessels were calling here every day, landing mining machinery, rails, engines, and material for the swagger permanent buildings they were erecting up at the mine. There were a number of engineers living here with all their workmen; there was a big office staff; there was a German pilot and a Belgian pier-master—all getting big pay. I did very well. Though I say it myself, I was a bit of a favourite and was beginning to fancy myself as the coming Selfridge of Chile.

“Then the blow fell. The mine became productive, and very naturally the company decided to shift everything they could up to it. I was not unduly perturbed; I simply decided to shift my store up there too. But about that time something else happened to upset my plans and eventually bring me to my present plight. I fell foul of the German manager. He is a great brute: foul, a bully, and a cad. One day, just outside my store, he felled an unfortunate workman who had not been quick enough

to get out of his imperious way, and was kicking his ribs in when my attention was called. As everybody in the place was an employee of the company, no one cared to interfere till I sailed in and stopped him very effectually. He never forgave me; he made up his mind to get his own back, and he had the power. The company opened a store at the mine, and one in opposition to me here. The company's wholesale prices left no profit on retail, but many of my customers, even the poorest among them, stuck to me loyally. Then the manager played his trump card: he invented these tokens. They are, of course, legal tender only in Maldonado, but, when recognising their legality, the Chilean Government decreed that the company must accept them in payment for anything they sell. The manager gave instructions that the company's employees must pay in tokens for anything they bought from me, and that strangled me. Very soon I was down to my last *peso*. No bank would accept the tokens. Not for a sack-full of the damned things could I get even one packet of cigarettes from Valpo. The day came when I had nothing left to sell; I closed my store.

“I would have gone away then, but I hadn't a bean. I lived in a shack, and the wife of one of the workmen fed me. I paid her with tokens. The German pilot had gone by that time, and the Belgian pier-

master took to booze. The manager sacked him. I *will* say this for the swine—he's tremendously keen on the efficiency of the port. Much to my surprise he offered me the job, and I jumped at it, for I was afraid that idleness would drive me mad. There was a snag, however: he stipulated that I should take my pay in tokens, thus permanently bolting the door of my prison. He's a better psychologist than most Germans, that manager. He knew that to conquer boredom I would either have to work like hell, or, like the Belgian, take to drink and get sacked. I chose work; it's healthier—but he has got me, body and soul. For two years I have been a slave; getting my food and a roof over my head like any other slave, but precious little else. I haven't had a new suit since I came here; there's nothing but cheap stuff for the workmen in the store. I have two trunks full of tokens in my shack—which has no fastenings on doors or windows—and the trunks aren't even locked; but I couldn't produce one copper coin at the moment to save my life.

"About six months ago I thought I saw a chance to get clear. I was very ill, and the doctor who came down from the mine to see me said I must go away for a sea trip. I explained how things were and he went off to see what he could do. He never came back; the manager had refused to exchange any of my tokens.

I just had to lie in my shack and get well the best way I could. The head clerk was very good to me. He gets the dubious credit of possessing the manager's full confidence, but he's a decent little chap, though at times he seeks, by funny little forms of derision, to ease the pangs of inferiority that swine makes us feel. I told you I could not get a boat to come off in; that is because of one of the dozen rules made to humiliate me. Though I am in charge of all the craft in the place, I can't get a boat for my own use, and there are spies to see that I don't. I can't have a quiet scull round the bay of an evening, about the only decent thing I could do. After work is done I just go back to my shack and brood. A hell of a life . . . yes."

"Then, for heaven's sake, get away from it."

Cairns shrugged his shoulders and smiled wearily.

"No, Charles; and, remembering that you used to be a pugnacious little devil yourself when you were roused, I don't believe you would either. I haven't counted my tokens for months, but there must be nine or ten thousand dollars worth in those two trunks. Here the only use they are is to provide me with my food and a roof over my head; away from here they are of no use at all. If I slunk away now I should be making a present of all that money to the company, and I'm damned if I'll do that."

"An admirable sentiment, old boy," Benson admitted; "but how is it all going to end? Are you going to spend the rest of your days in this frightful hole?"

"God knows; perhaps there might be a change of management; perhaps . . . oh, hell!"

For a time the two men smoked in moody silence.

"There's another thing that ties me here," Cairns said at last. "As I told you, I haven't got a penny in the world apart from these blasted tokens. You have kindly offered me a passage to Iquique; you have been very kind in other ways, and I'm very sorry I was rude to you on the pier—but suppose I accepted your offer. What would I live on in Iquique? What chance would I have of getting an officer's berth dressed as I am? I haven't even a sextant. So sure was I that I was going to be a successful merchant that I gave it away, with all my navigation books, to the apprentices in the only British sailing-ship that has been here up till the time *you* rolled up. No, Charles, I must just stick it—and I'm not

whining. You can have no idea how much I have enjoyed this evening, and I'm sorry if I have spoiled it for you with my tale of woe. However, you asked for it."

"I *did* ask for it, old boy; and I'm damned glad I got it," Benson said heartily. "Have a whisky-and-soda."

He had asked for it and in a real heart-to-heart talk he had got it; but he felt that he could do nothing about it. Absolutely nothing. He had been thinking over old days in their training ship, and had now a very clear recollection of the Teddy Cairns of that time—a fine, upstanding, handsome lad of sixteen. He had a bit of a temper, though, and—what was more to the point at the present time—he was as stubborn as a mule and as proud and touchy as a Spanish *hidalgo*. The captain sighed, for he had been deeply touched; but he was perfectly sure that if he offered his guest even a small loan, enough to cover his expenses in Iquique till he got a ship, Teddy Cairns would vanish up the companionway, and neither pleading nor abject apology would bring him back.

V.

The ice having been broken, the first plunge taken, Cairns spent most of his evenings on board the *Talca*, and her officers could not but notice the change that came over him, both in demeanour and appearance. He

lost the somewhat hang-dog manner that characterised him the first evening he supped on board. Though he still wore the shabby blue suit, he seemed to have discovered some decent shirts and collars. The com-

pany of his fellow countrymen had made a different man of him and he became cheerier and more self-respecting every day. When Benson went ashore after breakfast each morning he found the pier-master working as hard as ever—but freshly shaven.

With but one break the work of discharging the cargo went on steadily, Cairns ensuring a plentiful supply of empty lighters. The weekly calls of the Chilean coasting mail-steamers made little difference. The real break came when a large German cargo liner took the attention of all the lighters, stevedores, and *lancheros*. Within two days she loaded a thousand tons of ore without a hitch, and during her stay the manager came down from the mine to do her honour. Captain Benson did not meet him, nor did he particularly want to. He was feeling well pleased with himself. He had received a congratulatory letter from his owners, with a private one from his good friend the junior partner enclosed. The junior partner wrote: "The old man is delighted with you; not so much for your splendid outward passage, because he expects that from you, but because of the way you collared that intermediate freight at Valparaiso. He said, 'Thank God he's getting some business sense at last,' so it's up to you to guard your new reputation by a severe scrutiny of the bills at Maldonado."

"The way I collared the freight; I like that," the cap-

tain mused when he read the letter. "I didn't want the damned stuff."

The bills at Maldonado were likely to be heavy, though they would still leave a gratifying margin of profit on the entirely unexpected inter-port freight, but they should not be much heavier than they would have been at Valparaiso for the same things. There was five hundred tons of sand ballast to be paid for; and there were accounts for meat, fresh water, and other stores, all supplied by the mining company, to be met. Captain Benson gave the head clerk notice of his impending departure, and asked that his accounts should be made ready two days before it. He had calculated that the total bill would come to a little over eight thousand dollars, and got a shock when the head clerk presented it to find that it was well over ten thousand. He ran his eye over the items.

"Here; what's this?" he cried.

The head clerk assumed an air of surprised uprightness.

"What is what, *señor*?" he asked politely.

"Pilotage in and out; towage in and out. I had neither in, and I'll have neither out."

"It is the custom of the port, *señor*."

"Well, I don't intend to pay for either; you can wipe them off," the captain said with decision.

"I cannot possibly do that without the manager's permission, *señor*."

"All right; ring him up."

Again the head clerk did his derisory pantomime before the telephone, and soon Captain Benson became aware that a very angry voice was speaking at the other end of it.

"The manager says you must pay the bill as it stands, *señor*," the clerk said.

"Tell him I refuse to."

More conversation through the telephone followed.

"The manager says you must, *señor*, or he will stop your ship from sailing," the clerk reported.

"Tell him he can't—but he can try, if he's looking for trouble."

The head clerk passed on the message verbatim and got a reply.

"The manager says will you speak to him, *señor*?"

"I will not," said Captain Benson, who looked upon the telephone as an invention only fit for clerks and other people who worked in offices—an invention of the devil, indeed.

"I am *very* sorry, *señor*," the clerk said humbly in answer to the next message through the telephone. To Captain Benson he murmured, "The manager says he will come down to Maldonado tomorrow morning."

"Tell him I shall be here bright and early."

The head clerk delivered the message, hung the receiver on its hook, and scowled fiercely at the instrument.

"The manager is very angry, *señor*," he said.

"He's likely to be angrier still before I'm finished with him," Captain Benson said lightly.

It was an oppressively hot morning, with hardly a breath of wind, when the captain landed at the pier about nine o'clock and made for the office. The manager had got there before him. He was sitting at the head clerk's desk, but rose and extended his hand cordially when the captain entered. He was a large man, with great shoulders, and he looked gross. The tussore silk jacket he wore was strained and wrinkled in the way of the buttons—but not with fat. The man was hard and fit, and his hands were huge and hairy. He would undoubtedly be a tough customer in a rough and tumble. His square face, which looked capable of expressing either *bonhomie* or intense brutality in accordance with his mood, was clean shaven. His head evidently had also been shaved quite recently, but now it was covered with short stiff bristles. A determined jaw stuck out aggressively, but he was smiling. Instead of the overbearing arguments the captain had expected, he was being met with diplomacy.

"You have something in our bills that you wish to dispute, captain," the manager said pleasantly.

He spoke English with hardly a trace of an accent. Captain Benson wriggled uncomfortably in his chair. It was in just such a situation as this that he failed

as a business man. Had the manager tried to bully him he would have been happy, but he hated to argue over money matters with a man who seemed disposed to be decent, even kindly.

"Well, yes," he said almost apologetically. "There are two items. First—pilotage. I did not have a pilot on board my ship. I did not know there was a pilot at the port, and certainly I have never seen one."

"Ah, but the pilot is always on board the steam tug, captain."

"No, no, Mr Manager; that won't do. The pilot of a vessel must be on board of the vessel he is piloting—if he can get on board."

"But at this port pilotage is compulsory, therefore his services must be paid for whether he is on board the vessel or not."

"I'm sorry to have to correct you about the law of this country," the captain said blandly, "but there is no compulsory pilotage in Chile."

"So?"

"So."

"Let that pass," the manager said. He was still smiling; he had taken the correction well. "Now, I understand, there is the towage. You will surely have the services of the tug to take your vessel to sea."

"I surely will *not*," Captain Benson declared emphatically.

"Well, captain, I must warn you that one fine ship tried to go out without the aid of our

tug. She was Swedish and her captain was a good seaman. She is here yet. Doubtless you have seen the wreck lying on the reef. Yes?"

"I *have*; and I damned nearly hit it through the incompetence of the master of your tug. If I hadn't cut the tow-rope and backed out to sea again *my* ship would have been there yet, and you would have had to fish for your cargo between the tides instead of having it discharged comfortably."

It was then the captain saw the real manager. As he turned on the head clerk a look of almost demoniacal fury came over the German's face—and that look provided the very tonic Captain Benson needed. The Chilean grovelled; he seemed ready to fall on the knees that were knocking together and beg for mercy. The captain had never seen a human being in such a state of terror, and a feeling of nausea came over him.

"Why was I not told?" the manager roared.

The head clerk tried to reply, but could only mumble.

"All right; I shall deal with that *schwein* later," the manager snapped. His manner changed; again he was suave. "That settles it, captain," he said. "You see, I am jealous for the good name of our port. The items will be deducted. What are a couple of thousand *pesos* between gentlemen, anyhow? Up at the mine I often lose more

than that at poker in a few hours."

He tore up the separate accounts for pilotage and towage, and threw the total bill at the head clerk with orders to amend it; then he pulled a box of cigars out of a drawer in the desk.

"Now, captain, if you will just sign the various accounts we will recover the money from your agents in Valparaiso," he said. "Have a cigar."

Captain Benson's reaction to this offer was a very curious one. He went to the door, took a whistle out of his pocket and blew it. A minute later two hefty apprentices in uniform appeared, each carrying a large sack.

"Empty the bags on to this table," the captain said.

From the sacks the boys produced smaller bags, each bag containing waxen tokens to the value of five hundred dollars. They shook the sacks and more tokens of smaller denomination rolled out.

"What the devil is this?" the manager roared.

"I made them up like that so they might be counted more easily," Captain Benson said sweetly. "I think I have the exact amount of the amended bill there."

"This is an outrage," the manager yelled. "I shall not accept them."

"But you must. Again I am sorry to correct you about the law of Chile, but you *must* accept them as legal tender for

everything I have obtained from your company."

"You think you know all about the law of Chile," the manager sneered.

"I'm afraid I don't," the captain admitted modestly; "but, you see, there is a British Consul in Iquique and a weekly mail service."

The reference to the British Consul goaded the manager to fury. Again his face became distorted with rage and his eyes blazed fiercely. He leapt from his seat and, with his huge fists clenched, rushed at the senior apprentice. But swift as he was, Captain Benson was swifter. The apprentice stood his ground, and in a second his captain was in front of him facing the German.

"None of *that*," he warned sharply.

The eyes of the two men met, and for half a minute they held; then those of the heavily breathing manager dropped. He was beaten and, coming to his senses, knew it.

"Receipt that bill if the payment is correct," he growled. He shook his fist in the direction of the invisible pier. "I know where you got those tokens," he shouted. "He shall pay for this. *Gott in Himmel!* he shall pay."

He went outside, while the captain and his apprentices waited patiently till the head clerk, with fumbling fingers, counted the tokens. At last he announced that the amount was correct, stamped the amended bill with the com-

pany's rubber stamp, and handed it over.

"Captain," he whispered sadly, "I am so very sorry for *Señor Cairns*."

Outside, the manager, having lit a cigar, was staring moodily at the harbour.

"Good-bye, Mr Manager," Captain Benson said brightly.

"Oh, no; not good-bye, Mr Captain, but *au revoir*," the

manager answered harshly. "I shall see you again soon—very soon. I shall stay here till tomorrow to watch you put your beautiful ship on the reef. Then you shall come to me for my tug. Yes; so that I can watch you I shall stay the night in this miserable place."

"Too bad," Captain Benson replied. "Perhaps I might be able to do something about it."

VI.

The manager went back into the office and sent for the skipper of the tug. After kicking the unfortunate Chilean around the office in the interests of efficiency, blacking his eyes, and splitting his lips, the manager felt better, and settled down to check some of the office books. He would deal with the cursed pier-master later. He had an excellent lunch, which the servant who accompanied him from the mine had brought down, then returned to the books. About three o'clock he thought he heard singing—or was it the rustling of the wind which had freshened, as it usually did about that time? He went to the door and looked at the *Talca*. Men were working forward, and the haunting strains of a chanty in slow waltz time came floating across the bay. Hearing it coming over the water—as a chanty should always be heard—even the manager's critical German ear was satisfied. The soloist had a

powerful bass voice. Distance smoothed out any lack of harmony there might have been in the chorus—

"Good morning, Mrs Murphy; good morning, sir, says she. Heave away my Johnnies, heave away-ay.
Good morning, Mrs Murphy; we're going off to sea.
And away, my Johnny boy; we're all bound to go."

The manager called for his powerful binoculars, trained them on the barque, and realised she was getting under way. Her crew had manned the windlass; the men were tramping round the capstan on the forecastle-head, and the chain cable was moving in through the hawse-pipe. The manager had never seen a large sailing-ship get under way unaided by a steam tug, and he watched with considerable interest. The barque was head to wind, lying broadside on to the entrance; how, the manager wondered, could she be got to point in the right direction. The heaving

ceased; two men ran up the main-rigging, two others up the fore. Landsman though he was, the manager noticed that the yards on those two masts were braced up for opposite tacks, and also recognised that when sailing towards the entrance the barque must have the wind on the port beam. The lower and upper topsails were loosed; the canvas fell from the yards and the sails were quickly set. The hands returned to the fore-castle-head and resumed their heaving. The chain cable came up and down; the anchor was aweigh. The wind pressed on the fore-topsails which were flat aback, and slewed the barque's head to starboard; jibs, which had been lying loosed on bowsprit and jib-boom, went up their stays and were sheeted home. The main-topsails, pointed into the wind, were shivering. The manager lacked neither brains nor perception. He grasped the method—so easy in theory, so difficult in practice—of manœuvring a square-rigged vessel. You simply took pressure off one end and put it on the other, using the helm as required, of course. Now the pressure was all on the *Talca's* fore-end. She brought the wind nearly abeam, and her main-topsails filled. The foreyards were hauled round and the fore-topsails filled also. She gathered way and sped toward

the entrance, sail after sail being set as she went.

Soon all her white wings, in tall leaning pillars, were spread. She travelled swiftly, leaving a bubbling white wake that stretched, as straight as an arrow, back across the blue waters of the bay. She drew near to the entrance, and with all the intensity of his passionate being the manager willed her towards the reef. Now she was abreast of it, and his heart leapt. Something had gone wrong. Through his glasses he could see that the leaning pillars of canvas had come more upright; the lower sails were hanging limp. But, to his chagrin, they filled again a minute later, and the reef gradually opened out behind her. The *Talca* had cleared the entrance and gained the open sea. The manager shrugged his shoulders.

"That damned English captain has got guts," he said in grudging admiration.

It was now time to *strafe* the pier-master. His peremptory order sent the summoning words "*Señor Cairns! Señor Cairns!*" echoing from stevedore to *lanchero* right along the pier and all over the lighters. There was no response. *Señor Cairns*, financially rehabilitated by the exchange of his waxen tokens for good Chilean dollars, had shaken the sand of Maldonado off his Blucher boots for good.

WARMINSTER TO LIMPSFIELD.

BY J. R. C.

'FRIDAY' is a heavily built bay gelding of uncertain age, but probably nearer twenty than fifteen. He had spent the first fortnight of August in camp at Warminster with the Inns of Court Regiment, and at the end of camp his return to his home at Limpsfield caused some difficulty. If he went by rail he would arrive before his owner could be there to meet him; and he would arrive without a tail. Having in early youth dropped through the floor of a horse-box, he distrusted that method of conveyance, and would exercise all his large stock of low cunning to defeat those who tried to box him. Once successfully entrained, he would take his mind off the horrors of the journey by trying to force his way backwards out of the box—to the detriment of his tail, however well bandaged it might be. Not knowing the horse, I light-heartedly suggested that his owner should solve the problem by riding him home, and before I realised what trouble I was bringing on my head I found that I myself was committed to that enterprise.

I could not leave for a couple of days after the break-up of camp, and a former owner of Friday who lived nearby kindly consented to look after him until I was ready to start. The

rest among his old friends in the haunts of his youth did him a lot of good after the continuous rain, mud and hard work of camp, but it made him extremely reluctant to leave Warminster when finally we set out at about three o'clock on Monday, 14th August. For the first mile along the Imber Road we travelled crabwise, Friday making a great deal of noise and trying hard to return. When we turned off the road and set a course across country for Imber by way of Bowls Barrow, Friday changed his technique while retaining his original intention. With each ridge and each valley he would change direction imperceptibly to the right, and by this method succeeded in getting his head towards Warminster again half a dozen times in the space of four miles.

On our way through the village of Imber we met a friend who invited us in for a drink. Friday, left out in the farmyard lashed firmly to a telegraph post with a clove-hitch supported by a couple of half-hitches on his headrope, vociferously expressed his disapproval of the delay. After a time the noise stopped, and becoming anxious lest he should have strangled himself on his headrope I went out to investigate; but he and his headrope

had disappeared. A small boy trustingly and obligingly lent me his bicycle—or at anyrate I took his bicycle—and about half a mile down the road I overtook Friday trotting out briskly for Warminster with his reins and headrope trailing. We returned the bicycle and once more turned our backs on Warminster; but after that Friday did nothing briskly, except on two occasions, until he reached home.

From Imber we went over West Lavington Down to St Joan à Gore's Cross, where we turned aside to pay our respects to the memory of Benjamin Colclough, whose AWFUL END is commemorated by the Highwayman's Stone. Friday having observed the inscription on the stone with its warning that "THE WICKED SHALL NOT GO UNPUNISHED," resumed the journey in thoughtful mood. From here we climbed steadily along the Ridge Way with the chimneys of West Lavington and Market Lavington four hundred feet below us and the whole of the Vale of Pewsey—quite the pleasantest valley in England or in Europe for that matter—spread at our feet. Clouds of butterflies rose from the grass to greet us and fluttered around Friday's ears, and all things military seemed infinitely far away. Friday broke into a gentle canter and I, to the surprise of labourers working in the fields below, burst into song.

An hour of this very pleasant progress brought us to the

summit of Urchfont Hill, where we stopped while Friday grazed and I considered our course, which up till then I had not bothered much about. Limpsfield lay rather more than a hundred miles away to the east, and not knowing the depravity of Friday's character, I was quite prepared to spend a week or even a month in his company. My only idea was to avoid the unpleasant features of the direct line which lay straight across Salisbury Plain—barbed wire, tanks, guns, and the sordid squalor of Stonehenge—and to keep away from hard roads. I had reached the summit of Urchfont Hill merely in pursuit of this purpose, and without any particular intention of going to Urchfont Hill.

The White Horse on Milk Hill, seven miles away across the valley, suggested attractive possibilities of exploring the Wansdyke; but, on the other hand, at Urchfont Hill above Dogtail Plantation, the Ridge Way turns due east, and the map holds out such attractive names as Chirton Maggot and Marden Cowbag, which called irresistibly for investigation. We girthed up and continued along the track.

I had just evolved a complete and satisfactory explanation of the origin and purpose of the White Horse when its sudden disappearance, as the setting sun threw the shadow of Clifford's Hill across it, reminded me that both Friday and I needed a drink, and that it would soon be time to decide where to

spend the night. Below us at the foot of a track lay the New Inn at Chirton, so we descended from the Ridge Way and quenched our thirsts; while I consumed bread and cheese, Friday emptied the over-filled feed-bag which he had brought from Warminster.

By the time we were ready to move the Ridge Way had begun to look very bleak and unattractive, and I decided to push on along the valley towards Pewsey and climb up to the Wansdyke next morning. Marden, Beccingstoke, and Woodborough seemed in the gathering gloom an unprepossessing maze of little lanes affording no accommodation for horse or man—probably they look very different in other circumstances. I had some good friends at Huish, and a sign-post announcing that it was only five miles away brought them to my mind. With them, I knew, we would both be welcome; and we were not disappointed.

Friday, during those five miles, became wrapped in a growing depression from which he only recovered when he found himself ensconced for the night in a comfortable box, groomed, watered and fed, and with a manger full of hay. We had been on the road for six hours, including stops, and covered twenty-five miles, of which less than five had been on made roads.

I was awakened on Tuesday morning by Friday's strident reminder that six o'clock was the proper time to water and

feed a horse. After having attended to those matters and given him a rub down, I turned my attention to the weather and plans for the day's journey. It promised to be very hot indeed, a promise all too well fulfilled as the day wore on. The unshaded top of the Wansdyke did not appear nearly as attractive as it had done the night before, while the thought of the fly-infested shade of Savernake Forest to which it would lead made me fickle all over. I promptly decided to forget the Wansdyke and follow the tow-path of the Kennet and Avon Canal till it reached the Thames, along the Thames to Surbiton, and then by way of Epsom Downs and Caterham to Limpsfield. Needless to say, we did not follow that route very far.

After breakfast I spent an hour rearranging the load on Friday's back. In spite of excellent advice from experts, it had been extremely ill-distributed. The saddle was all wrong in the first place. An ordinary trooper's saddle, though very heavy in itself with its wooden side-bars and heavy iron arches, spreads the weight along the horse's back, and the webbing bands which carry the seat act as springs between horse and rider. On a saddle of that type, carrying a heavy weight of equipment, one can ride great distances with the minimum of fatigue to horse and rider; but the sergeant-major had offered me the loan of an officer's type of

saddle, and who was I to reject an offer from so exalted a quarter? An officer's saddle has all the disadvantages of every type, being heavy as a trooper's but without the advantage of 'springing,' while the weight of rider and equipment are concentrated over almost as small an area as with an ordinary hunting saddle. On the front arch of this abomination I carried a mackintosh so rolled as to get in the way of my knees. Beneath the saddle was a folded blanket and round it a surcingle to fasten the blanket on at night. The sharp edge of the surcingle strap cut into my thighs, and the total width of blanket, girth-buckles, saddle-flaps and surcingle made it impossible for me to use my legs on the horse, which was excessively fat anyhow.

The farrier-sergeant had lent me a couple of very fine leather saddle-bags which, he explained, were absolutely damp-proof. I had no occasion to test that, but I am prepared to believe it, for they had no other merit. They were extremely heavy, and held next to nothing. In one I carried grooming kit and a pair of shoes; in the other tooth-brush, pyjamas, shorts, and a spare shirt. These bags were attached to 'D.'s' at the rear of the saddle, and on the same side as the lighter of the two I carried a feed-bag containing two feeds. The weight of the whole outfit was about as much as I could lift—and the unfortunate Friday

had about twelve stone of me to carry in addition!

The shoes, shorts, shirt, dandy-brush, curry-comb, saddle-soap, sponge and all I made into a brown paper parcel and sent home by post. A dandy-brush is unnecessary anyhow; a curry-comb one can always borrow (it appears to be the only instrument used in the grooming of farm horses!); on cleaning saddlery I was prepared to take a risk, while as to spare clothes for myself I felt that any village shop could provide me with a shirt when I needed one. A body-brush, rubber, and hoof-pick were enough in the way of grooming kit, and for myself I needed only a tooth-brush, which, of course, includes a razor and all the rest of it. All that lightened the weight a little, and to add to my own comfort I put the surcingle inside one of the saddle-bags and moved the mackintosh to the rear arch. The whole distribution of weight was still all wrong, there being nothing forward at all, but there appeared to be no alternative arrangement.

A service bridle-headcollar with snaffle and headrope is a very satisfactory arrangement indeed once the art of tying a ceremonial knot has been mastered. It is the work of a second to undo the brow-band tabs, slip off the bridle-head, and tether the horse by the headrope. Another feature of my equipment which gave me some satisfaction was the

arrangement of feeds. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining oats and chaff in the English countryside, it was necessary to carry two feeds unless the journey was to become a pilgrimage from one corn-chandler's shop to the next. To carry them in separate bags added unnecessarily to the weight and increased the chance of loss, while to stop the horse eating when he had consumed half the contents of the bag was not possible with a horse as greedy as Friday. The difficulty was overcome by a light cotton bag carrying one feed inside the feed-bag with the other feed loose. Before feeding for the first time one merely removed the cotton container, turning its contents into the feed-bag for the second feed.

Even with this arrangement Friday had some strange meals before he reached home. On one day he was able to get only some patent dairy feed, "Guaranteed to increase the milk yield." He did very well indeed on that and thoroughly enjoyed it, but he was not so happy with another day's rations of chicken meal which we managed to beg from a poultry farm, even though it was "Guaranteed to increase the egg-laying capacity." Only when he had rather unhappily finished the second feed did I realise from the state of the bag that the stuff must have contained enough grit and sand to give a less omnivorous animal colic for a month. The normal basis of feeding was about ten

or twelve pounds of oats a day, given in four feeds—morning, mid-day, afternoon, and evening—with plenty of chaff, and as much hay as he cared to consume during the night.

It was half-past nine when we started out after all these rearrangements, and it was already excessively hot. In spite of that Friday suddenly decided to hurry. The cause of the hurry was a large sow, who either suspected us of evil intentions towards her offspring or else was endeavouring to re-establish control over a disorderly family of piglets by showing them that big fat horses were afraid of her, even if little pigs were not. She charged out of a gate at Friday's heels, and he put his ears back, gave a squeal of terror, and was off down the slippery road like the wind, determined not to stop until he had put the canal between himself and the sow. At the last moment he suddenly decided that the canal was more than he could jump. As he swerved round on the edge a piece of the bank gave way under him, but to my surprise neither of us went in.

The tow-path was grass-grown and well shaded by trees, and after this initial hurry we dawdled along happily enough, watching the fishes and dragonflies, in both of which Friday seemed to get very interested; he kept on trying to stop and stare at them. The only drawback was the bridges.

There were fifteen in those ten miles. At the first of them Friday stopped dead, and it was a quarter of an hour's work to drive him under it. He would be neither ridden nor led. I had to chase him, belabouring his stern with the whip which his owner had urged me to take and to use. The second bridge only took ten minutes to pass, and the third he let me lead him under without any trouble at all. As we approached the fourth he showed no reluctance, but trotted briskly forward. Only when it was too late to dismount—for the tow-path suddenly narrowed down to about eighteen inches, all of which were occupied by Friday—did I realise that the bridge was far too low to allow a horse with a rider on its back to pass underneath. I ducked and lay flat along his back, looking down into the water, which seemed extremely sinister and uninviting in the black shadow of the bridge, but I suffered nothing worse than bumps and bruises on the back and side from the brick-work and a good deal of green slime on my clothes. After that I dismounted at each bridge, but Friday, with his equine sense of humour, attempted each time to get back under the bridge again as I was remounting.

At Savernake Tunnel I had to leave the canal for half a mile, and after passing the railway station missed the path leading back to the tow-path. We cantered across a very nice

piece of turf, and after half a mile found ourselves completely wired in and had to go all the way back to Savernake Station again—our first experience of the 'Snakes and Ladders' game which was to keep us pretty busy during the rest of the trip.

Friday thoroughly enjoyed the 'Ladders'—those pleasant stretches of soft green turf running in the right direction—but he was very much distressed by the 'Snakes,' barbed-wire fences and padlocked gates sending him back to his starting-point. When we met a 'snake' his ears would droop, and he would plod back with dreadful slow shakings of his head. Nothing would make him trot until he felt that we were heading in the right direction again. Occasionally we managed to cheat and turn a 'snake' into a 'ladder.' A barn, be it noted, usually has not less than two entrances, and if the barn is situated at the side of a field it not infrequently happens that one of those entrances is outside the field and neither wired nor padlocked. Two or three times we managed to get out of a maze of wire by going into a barn—a useful discovery which led to no unpleasantness, though it might well have done so.

Unpleasantness, in fact, was extremely infrequent, although we trespassed all over the place. Farmers went out of their way to be helpful, suggesting shortcuts across their fields and walking with us to show us the way. The only thing they

asked was that I left no gates open. I met only two troublesome people in the course of the trip, and the recollection of both encounters still gives me a feeling of satisfaction.

At one point the entrance to a bridle road, clearly marked on the map, was barricaded with a wired and padlocked gate and a large array of "Trespassers will be prosecuted" notices. At every hedge the track was obstructed, and in several fields it had been worked with a rototiller, giving a surface on which neither horse nor man could walk and in which we got completely bogged several times. The track was little more than a mile long, but it took very nearly an hour to cross it and reach the gate leading into the main road. On this gate a person was sitting, and I asked him politely if he would mind opening it for me. He replied, "You go back the way you came." I said that I had no wish to do that, and suggested that if he would at least get off the gate I could open it myself. To that he said, "No one ain't going to get no rights of way over my land." I explained that I had no desire to get a right of way over his land, but wished to get away from it as quickly as possible, and that if any question of right of way was involved I was willing to waive this and pay any reasonable sum for the privilege of going through the gate. He then started repeating, "You go back the

way you came," and as he did not appear amenable either to reason or mere politeness I left him and tried to find another way round.

To fight our way over the line of the bridle-road again would have been far too much trouble, so we went round through a large number of gates, all of which I left open. His farm was grossly overstocked, so I spread some of the stock about. The dairy cows which were due for milking got very excited when we chased them, but I admit that it was a mistake to have let the bull out of his paddock; he chased us down the road for quite a long way until a motor-car distracted his attention. As I resumed the journey after these pastoral pursuits, I regretfully turned over in my mind the things which I should have said to this stickler for legal rights. I was still thinking of him an hour later when the road brought me to the far side of the gate on which he was still sitting. I told him some of the better things I had thought about him, and he got abusive. I then told him what I had done to his gates and his stock, and he said he would have the law on me. He repeated that several times, and to distract him from so unprofitable an idea I pointed at a water-tower on a hill about half a mile away, and told him—quite untruthfully—that I had turned on the tap underneath it. He stopped talking and jumped off

the gate. When last I saw him he was running at an extraordinarily fast speed in the blazing sun up the hill towards the water-tower. I suppose that his feelings, when he found that the tap had not been turned on, must have been somewhat mixed.

The only other unpleasant person I met was a gardener in the town of Milford. He was endeavouring to appropriate to an already over-large garden the grass margin beside the main road, and he ordered me emphatically and offensively to get off the grass. I rode straight on, and he caught at the bridle and attempted to turn the horse on to the slippery tarmac, packed with lorries and cars travelling fast. I told him what the prophet Isaiah had forecast for himself and his employer, and added in the somewhat coarse language of a trooper in the 'Devil's Own' that his personal habits were objectionable and his ancestry uncertain. He went away and left me on the grass. I learnt afterwards that his employer was a very venerable lady and a pillar of the Church in those parts, and that though she might love truth, she probably never let it fall so badly on her servant's ears, and that therefore he was probably unaccustomed to such language.

To return to the canal. By the time we reached Crofton it was clearly lunch-time. We made a small detour to satisfy ourselves that the great beam-engine, which has been pumping

the contents of Wilton Water into the summit-level of the canal without interruption ever since Watt installed it, was still running; then we turned south over the grass track that marks the line of the Roman road, and came to the White Swan at Wilton. The pub has changed a lot in recent years, but the beer was still excellent, and after lunch the hill which stood between us and the canal seemed an insurmountable obstacle. For no better reason than that, I abandoned the idea of travelling by tow-path, and meandered off in a south-easterly direction instead. We wandered through fields and woods by way of Marten, Botley Down, Smay Down, Henley, Little Down, Linkenholt, and Faccombe to Ashmansworth, where we refreshed ourselves at the Plough, which was just opening as we arrived.

No accommodation was available at the Plough, but the landlord suggested a farmer at the end of the village who might be able to put us up. He could not, but suggested one at the other end who might. An hour of travel up and down the village street, which seemed to stretch every time we went along it, revealed that most of the population of the British Isles had for some very obscure reason indeed decided to spend their holidays there, and had brought with them their giraffes, traction-engines, hippopotamuses, tanks, and travelling circuses—that

there was accommodation for all these but not for a horse; and as for oats and hay, what were they? Never heard of them in Ashmansworth. Doubtless I libel the village, but I felt very bitter as we set out once more along the road with night drawing on.

A mile or so down the road I came upon a man cutting up and burning a yew hedge, and consulted him about our problem. He referred me to his master, who very kindly offered Friday the hospitality of a most comfortable stable, and suggested that an inn down the road might be able to put me up. By the time Friday had been groomed, fed, and generally made comfortable for the night it was getting late, and his host generously extended his hospitality to me as well. It was an unexpected piece of spontaneous hospitality for which I shall always remain grateful to him and his delightful family. Though we had been on the road for nine hours, and both felt thoroughly weary, the map showed that with all our meanderings we had only covered twenty-five miles.

Friday's noisy demands to be fed and away started at cock-crow, and though I was in no hurry to leave so pleasant a spot, he had me on the road long before nine. The day was very much cooler, with a threat of rain, and once or twice it started drizzling. Friday was in grand condition and set out at a good pace across the fields and by way of Highclere Park

and Siddown Hill to Burghclere. Near Burghclere Station was an inviting grass track which we took, only to find it ending in a pinch-gut gate. A farmyard lay on the left, however, and the farmer kind-heartedly invited us through, once more making a 'ladder' of a 'snake.' We turned right after the station, and so by way of Ladle Hill to Symondton Park and a grass track that went on and on as far as the eye could see.

I had no idea where it went and did not bother to look at map or compass—the sky was overcast and I had lost all sense of direction in the woods at Symondton Park—it was the track we had dreamt about, and along it we went. A belt of trees across the track must have been the Portway, and farther on we came to a Gipsy encampment. We stopped, and by way of making conversation, I asked where we were and where we were likely to come to, not that I was seriously interested in the answers. They told me that we were in the neighbourhood of Willesley Warren and on the way to Overton. We did not get to Overton. I pulled out the compass before then and turned away to the east, coming out on the main road at Oakley Station.

The map (which proved our grass track to be little more than four miles long, though I had guessed its length as ten) showed that three miles farther along on the Basingstoke Road there was an inn called the Stag and Hounds, and

there, I decided, we would lunch. Keeping where possible to the fields alongside the road, we were lucky to find more 'ladders' than 'snakes.' We reached the Stag and Hounds only to find that it was a 'road-house' rather than an inn. It had a flagstaff but no horse-trough; not even a bucket. The barmaid very kindly brought Friday a drink in a basin which was, I suspect, normally used for washing up glasses. It must have had a beery taste to it; for he emptied it again and again, each time clamouring for more.

By now the sun had come out and was roastingly hot, and the flagstaff to which Friday was tethered afforded insufficient shade for so fat a horse. The saddle blanket, though it was a nuisance to carry and was never needed at night since we were always lucky in finding a warm stable, certainly justified its existence in protecting the horse's back from the sun when we off-saddled at lunch-time; without it, I am sure that he would have had a sore back long before we reached home.

As I lay on my back in the shadow of the horse, drinking mild and bitter, I was joined by a gentleman who had arrived in a pony-cart laden with vegetables. He told me that he had seen service in the Boer War, or it may possibly have been the Crimean, or both. His pony was of an incredibly great age (which I do not now remember), and he considered

that Friday needed more green feed if he were to attain a similar longevity. He insisted on giving Friday more green feed, pushing an immense load of fresh-cut grass into his feed-bag. Friday disliked anything which stood between him and his oats, and was not at all grateful for this contribution to his diet. He had to put in a lot of hard work before he was able to get all the oats without eating any of the grass, but he succeeded eventually, and left the grass untouched. At closing-time the veteran left me and I saddled up.

The combination of mild-and-bitter, and sun, and the Basingstoke By-pass, which had not been built when my map was published and in the existence of which I could not at first believe, very nearly defeated me. Ultimately I found my way to Hackwood Park, the owner of which will, I hope, forgive me the trespass. We left the park near Polecat Corner and made our way to a spot marked on the map as "Five Lanes End." There, being too lazy to look at the compass, I got hopelessly lost, and for half an hour we seemed to be travelling about inside a hedge. I felt very much like Christopher Robin when he is 'somewhere else instead.'

Ultimately we got out of the hedge and came to Long Sutton, where I was presented with a very welcome glass of home-brewed beer by a kindly villager who observed my distress at finding the inn closed. We had

varied luck with the 'Snakes and Ladders' game along this road, but we were able to keep hedges between us and the road most of the way until we reached the outskirts of Farnham. We often had to retrace our steps owing to wire or other obstacles, but by crossing to the other side of the road we were usually able to get along without taking to the highway. As we got into Farnham Friday seemed to think that he had done enough, and with recollections apparently of our attempts to find accommodation in Ashmansworth the previous evening, he marched determinedly in at every farm or hospitable-looking gateway that adjoined our path.

We stopped and fed at the Cricketers' Inn at Wreclesham—the only inn I know, apart from the Inner Temple, that provides tethering rings for the horses of its guests—and at six o'clock started out for the Half Moon Inn at Thursley, where stabling and forage are available. A little way up the road we met a horseman and stopped to pass the time of day. He told me that the Half Moon was still eight or nine miles away, and suggested that I should seek the hospitality of Mr Gardner at the Farnham Riding Establishment. As we had already covered thirty-six miles that day, I was very glad of his suggestion, and fortunate in that Mr Gardner managed to find accommodation for both the horse and myself. The

expert attention and strapping which Friday received there were such as he had not, I fear, enjoyed for a long time.

Early though we started on Thursday morning, others were earlier. Before we reached Frensham Ponds we had become very much involved with a large number of tanks which we met in a narrow lane. Friday dislikes tanks. The ponds themselves were thickly surrounded with small children who had been brought there in charabancs to eat oranges and drink ginger beer before breakfast, and farther on we came upon strangely dressed and unhappily married females playing golf. Women who play golf early in the morning, or at any other time, I am prepared to argue, are either unhappily married or likely to become so; and the sight of so much actual or potential domestic infelicity filled me with gloom which soon communicated itself to Friday. Thursley Common was the scene of much military activity, and here, to my embarrassment, Friday tried to make out that his usual role was not that of troop horse, but of an infantry officer's charger. In spite of my active opposition he forced his way between a column of infantry and the officer in charge just at the moment that they halted to receive a lecture from him. I kicked the horse. I beat him. I swore at him. I dismounted and tried to lead him; but until every one of those infantry-

men had made some facetious observation, he would not budge. Then, to complete the tale of misbehaviour, he kept me hopping round in a circle for about five minutes before I could get back into the saddle.

At Milford we came out on to the main road, and after the contretemps with the gardener, which I have already mentioned, I called in to see some friends, and spent a couple of hours in idle conversation, eating, and drinking very potent home-made wines. They recommended me to take to the tow-path of the River Wey at Godalming, and their advice was good, although the ride through Godalming down to the river was extremely unpleasant. Friday went at a slow walk, and the traffic behind had to wait.

Though there was a lot of opening and shutting of gates to be done along the tow-path, I was sorry to leave the river when we turned off at Shalford. We went up an incredibly muddy lane to the west of Shalford Church, and then, crossing the Guildford Road, took a lane leading up to the Chantries, and so came to the line of the Pilgrims' Way.

Crossing the road sounds easy, but with Friday it was not. He liked the sound of hooters, and main roads, and he always wanted to stop in the middle of them to watch the traffic. When approaching blind corners he would move into the track of oncoming vehicles and stop dead to see if they had good

brakes, and it was for occasions like this that I reserved the whip. I had to use it, too, at an accommodation level-crossing when he stopped to see if an oncoming train—the Cornish Riviera Express I believe it was—could pull up in time. He enjoyed trotting on roads, too; for he was wearing a massive set of shoes made for him specially for the journey by the Farrier-Corporal of Horse of the Blues, and the sound of them clattering on the road pleased him. The Corporal of Horse understood that I was going by road all the way and made the shoes on that supposition, but as I was on grass all the way except for half a dozen miles, they got very little wear indeed, and I think that they will probably outlast Friday himself. He could have made the journey unshod without suffering any harm.

I am told that it is perfectly easy to follow the line of the various Pilgrims' Ways by the mulberry trees. Pilgrims, it seems, left behind them a trail not of beer bottles and orange peel, but of mulberry seeds. These in due course germinated, and, it is said, the tracks are to this day marked by broad belts of mulberry. I could see no mulberries, and the line was very difficult to follow, so after a few miles I turned northward and climbed up to Netley Heath. Instead of keeping to the track which would have brought us out to Ranmore Common, I turned into the

woods, and for the next two hours we were hopelessly lost.

It did not take Friday long to sense that I was lost, that I was no longer riding him but had become a passenger, and he promptly decided to lie down and die. He seemed to fancy himself as one of the babes in the wood. His behaviour made confusion worse confounded; for so concerned was I to keep him moving that I paid insufficient attention to the need for keeping straight, and we must have wandered round Mountain Wood and Upper Beeches half a dozen times in a figure of eight. My own scanty stock of expletives having soon become exhausted, I was borrowing freely from the technical vocabulary of medical jurisprudence for the purpose of telling Friday what I thought of his conduct and character. Admittedly, my voice was raised rather more than was strictly necessary, but my language was technical rather than coarse. Suddenly in the darkest and gloomiest part of the wood a shadowy figure leaped from among the trees and stood itself in our path, crying in a loud voice, "Friend! Friend! Desist, I pray you, desist!" When I had recovered my voice after the shock of terror caused by this apparition, I stammered out some apologies, trying to explain that I had no idea that anyone was in earshot, and that the horse had no understanding of the technicalities which I was using, but

attended only to my tone of voice. The apparition listened patiently, then suddenly taking a step nearer pushed into my hand a Bible, interrupting my apologies with the words, "Friend, keep it! Read it! Study it and cultivate greater patience with poor dumb animals." He turned about and disappeared among the trees before I had recovered from my surprise sufficiently to ask him where we were or how we could get out of the wood.

At long last we came to the tea-house at Hillside, and while Friday finished the contents of his feed-bag I had an orgy of the crispest lettuces I have ever eaten and obtained the invaluable advice of the proprietor where we should spend the night. He strongly recommended the stables at Horsley Towers, less than two miles away, and I did well to take his advice.

At the entrance to Horsley Towers I met the youthful son of Mr Legg, and he conducted me to the stables through the labyrinth of tunnels and lunatic bridges that constitute the grounds of Horsley Towers. He discoursed, as we went, on Friday's points; but he was not as kind about them as his father, who said, "Must have been a valuable horse ten years ago. Stag-hunter type." Having seen Friday groomed and fed and settled for the night in a comfortable stable, I felt that I could with a clear conscience leave him in such competent hands, and I re-

solved to go back by train to London with all the saddlebags and unnecessary weight. Horsley Station was only a mile away, but by the time I had walked that mile with a small portion of the burden that Friday had carried thirty miles that day, I was feeling very sorry for myself.

I must admit that in running back to Town I was as much concerned with my own comfort as with Friday's. I wanted a clean shirt, and I also wanted to get rid of my Newmarket boots. Newmarkets are light and, with their ankle-straps, comfortable to walk in when one does a lot of leading, as I did with Friday—I made a point of getting off his back for at least ten minutes in each hour—but when Newmarkets get damp inside, as they must when one is riding in hot weather, it is impossible to pull them on. The ideal footgear for this kind of travel is ankle-boots with cloth gaiters, and these I adopted for the last day of the journey.

Leaving London by the 8.32 train for Horsley, I was on the road again by ten o'clock, accompanied by Mr Legg with his two sons and a small pupil. They came with us for the first three or four miles, leaving us once we were safely back on the road to Ranmore Common.

Friday went very much more briskly and happily in company, but began to make the usual nuisance of himself when we were alone again. 'Usual nuisance' covers a wide range

of evil tricks, from a convincing simulation of lameness to forced paroxysms of coughing which appeared to endanger his lungs but which could be stopped by a harsh word, a whack, or anything that momentarily diverted his attention from the job in hand.

With a party one could probably cover greater distances with less fatigue to man and horse; but only when alone can one wander vaguely and indefinitely about the countryside, changing one's mind about the route every time a pleasing stretch of grass appears. The difficulty, too, of finding accommodation and forage is very much less for one than for several.

From Ranmore Common we went north towards Camilla Lacey to see if it were as attractive as its name, then down the track past Bradley Farm and under the railway to the Leatherhead - Dorking Road. A train crossed the bridge as we passed under it, and Friday started off down the couple of hundred yards to the main road, with its concrete surface and dense traffic, as if all the sows in Wiltshire were after him. We managed somehow to swing left at the main road without disaster, and by the time we reached Burford Bridge were travelling normally again.

The west side of Box Hill provides a very steep and slippery climb, which Friday wished to take at a much faster pace than I could lead him. I had an unpleasant

feeling, too, that we might start descending backwards at any moment, but we reached the summit safely. After admiring the view we made for the Hand-in-Hand Inn where we lunched. Though they have luxurious stabling they have no forage—a matter for regret. From the Hand-in-Hand we went by way of Headly Heath and Pebble Comb to Walton Heath, and along the top of the Buckland Hills, Colley Hill, and Reigate Hill to Gatton Park. There is, I believe, a way through Gatton Park, but I could not find it, and we had to go round by a very unpleasant bit of road to Merstham. Here we picked up the line of the Pilgrims' Way once more, and were soon following the familiar track of Quarry Down, White Hill, and Arthur's Seat to Marden Castle. At Barrow Green Farm, which was in sight of Friday's home, I lost the line of the footpath. Friday turned very sharply and determinedly to the left, and as I did not know this piece of country at all, and he did, I let him have his way. Before long it became apparent that his intention was not to go home at all but to return to Warminster. To get him within two miles of Limpsfield involved a struggle, and for two hours we fought one another all round the countryside. We went north to Woldingham and east to Titsey Park, but at long

last we got to Limpsfield and our journey was ended.

Though we parted on the worst of terms, I would gladly make the journey all over again. I would take with me less luggage, and a canvas saddle-bag or haversack instead of two leather ones. For a saddle I would try and get hold of one of a type evolved experimentally years ago by the 10th Hussars from an Argentine *gaucho* saddle. It was, I am told, very light, with no rigid frame; merely two side-pannels connected at the top by straps on which the seat rested. Failing this, an ordinary trooper's saddle would do. As for maps, the 2½ inch to the mile map forecast by the Parliamentary Committee on the Ordnance Survey may one day be available, but until it comes the outline edition of the one-inch is good enough—it is certainly easier to read than the Popular Edition with its confusion of meaningless colours, and it is printed on much better paper. My compass, too, would be different, probably a Blacker Guide Compass on a wrist strap. But with all that, I am sure that however carefully I planned the route, studied the map, and took compass bearings, I could not find a pleasanter route than that which we covered, even though we did stretch the crow's hundred miles into a hundred and fifty.

THE GREEN POOL.

BY F. KINGDON WARD.

SOUTH through One Degree Channel, when Pulo Tika is dead astern, masking Turret Island and Chance Island on the port bow, the Pleiades Islands are abeam to starboard. You will not find that statement in the navigation rules for native pilots in the Archipelago; but I looked at our course as ruled on the chart and saw that it was so.

But you could not see the cluster of rocks known as the Pleiades, at least not from the bridge deck of the *Washburn*, or any other craft that commonly takes the inside course.

The *Washburn*—named after one of the Lieutenant-Governors when Burma, though the largest province of the Indian Empire, was still regarded as a troublesome milch-cow—was an incredibly old paddle steamer. She was built before the days of steam turbines for the coast trade. The war saw her painted battleship grey, a light gun mounted aft, and a few structural alterations. But even these glories and the magic letters H.M.S. could not make her look like a navy ship. Those two preposterous bulging boxes to port and starboard gave her a waddle which merely added pompousness to a sort of antique giddiness derived from her cruiser stern.

However, the Pleiades, none

of which is more than a hundred feet high, were beyond the horizon, and on the clearest day appeared only as a faint cloud low in the west.

H.M.S. *Washburn*, known irreverently but inevitably as the *Washtub*, was on special duty. She carried a half-company of Territorials under a junior officer, and there was a good deal of mystery and hush-hush about her job. All that was known for certain was that she cruised among the islands south of Tavoy, and that the soldiers took a more than ordinary interest in bathing. They seemed to be always ashore looking for seashells. At any rate they explored the least known and uninhabited of the hundreds of islands, large and small, strewn along the Tenasserim coast. Were they searching for oil, or gold, or more probably for wolfram (which contains the valuable mineral tungsten), or were they just having a holiday? Nobody knew.

My connection with the *Washtub* was an unusual one: I became a passenger on one of His Majesty's ships. At the significant date, as Counsel says, I was stationed near the Siamese frontier and had been called up to Rangoon for a conference. When the time came to return to duty I found I could only

get direct as far as Mergui, and would have to wait there for the one irregular and unreliable coasting steamer, or possibly borrow the Government launch. If I happened to arrive just after the steamer had left for Penang, and the launch was not available, I might have to wait a fortnight. I did not mind that. The evening after my arrival in Mergui, however, the Washtub put in, and the officer commanding the troops came up to the club, which, like most clubs in the back blocks of Burma, lives largely on the tourist traffic and floating officials. Bramall was a friend of mine, and, as he was leaving next day for the islands, he offered me a passage if I was in no immediate hurry. He could put me ashore in a couple of days. I jumped at the chance.

It was an eighteen hours' run to the *kampong* at the river's mouth, where the new wireless station was. But there were places to call at *en route*, nameless places at which ships do not call, known to the Selungs (or sea-gypsies, as they have been called), but not marked on the Admiralty chart. The Washtub would feel her way with the lead into new ports of call.

About midnight we went on board, and a few hours later I heard the clank of the anchor chains coming through the hawse-holes. Over a whisky-and-soda Bramall had told me what his duties were, although

by this time I had partly guessed.

It seemed there were gun-runners about. The organisation of such a new industry in this serene sea was difficult, because nobody wanted guns very much. They did not know what to do with them. Opium was different, or even—but that is a yarn for another day. But guns! And besides, ammunition was expensive; the supply was inadequate, the demand fitful, intermittent, uncertain, and just when you most needed it you never had any. Guns were no use for rhinoceros poaching anyhow, and the Washtub made what was unsatisfactory dangerous. The market, never buoyant, positively sagged. However, astute salesmen, with a gift for agitating, might whip up some enthusiasm from the point of view of novelty and even adventure. The Washtub was there to make a forlorn hope hopeless.

The place at least was perfect, the very opposite of the arid wastes of Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier, where gun-running is a flourishing industry, well capitalised and staffed by experts. Here every action was hidden from sight by a dense mantle of the tallest and thickest evergreen forest in the world. *Kanyin*, one of the valuable oil-bearing Dipterocarps, which rises 120 feet before exploding suddenly into a mighty crown, is a common tree; the ash-white trunks, 4 feet through, striped the forest like the braids of a green vene-

tian blind. Here gaped a deep-water inlet with bottle neck expanding into a great round bay, with a white collar of coral sand round it, against a battlement of forest; there stretched a long pallid green fringe of low mangrove standing on stilts at high tide in a half-fathom of Vandyke brown water before you came to solid rock and jungle. There were islands of the most curious shape, like starfish and half-moons, and turrets, and of every size.

Towards evening of the next day we were running down through Forest Strait. We had rounded the Tapir's Nose and were heading through Liberty Passage towards the open sea. It had been a clear hot day, and we had landed twice to explore pleasant sandy beaches. We had dropped anchor outside Warrington Inlet and had felt our way into the narrow jaws of King's Passage. Who, I wondered, was Warrington. Was he some inhuman sea-rover who had slain and pillaged down the coast, creeping on unsuspecting *kampongs* with his bloodthirsty crew? Or was he, on the contrary, some patient, honourable navigator, adding to knowledge and helping to solve the maze and make the Archipelago safe for ships? Anyhow, buccaneer or sea explorer, he has written his name indelibly on the map of the world: Warrington Inlet.

And King? Who was he? Of course he might have been a planter who had tried to

grow rubber on one of the islands, or had traded in coconuts and sold cheap trade goods to ignorant natives—or worse, whisky. He might have been a prospector who found tin, floated a company in London, made a fortune, and crippled a thousand credulous investors. But whoever he was, and whatever he did, he too has left his name on the map of the world.

By four o'clock in the afternoon of the following day we were approaching the Pleiades on a south-west course.

"That's the Birdsnest Rock," said Bramall, pointing; "there's an enormous cave in her. She's like a hollow tooth. I've never been in, but I've looked through from the outside and the Black Hole of Calcutta couldn't be blacker. The roof's plastered with birds' nests, which to a Chinese is as though it were covered with gold. Every year some Chink pays a big sum to the Government for the right to collect the damn things. It's a monopoly."

"How does he ensure his monopoly in these great open seas?" I asked.

"Oh, well, there's a certain amount of poaching and scrapping, I expect. But if a Chink gives good money for a monopoly you can bet your life he's going to make it pay. They make soup out of the nests, you know; have you ever seen one?" I shook my head. "They are something like those string gloves women wear, only pale green and the holes bunged up with dry glue. When boiled

they turn to jelly. Hallo! By Jove! There's a boat!"

We ran up on to the bridge. The mate was scanning the islands ahead, and Bramall drew his attention to a tiny boat which was rounding the Elgin Rock. He nodded.

"Selung fishing boat," he said, putting down the glass and taking the wheel from the bosun.

"We'd better take a look at her," said Bramall. We changed course four points, and the unwieldy ship slewed round to the west. This placed the Birdsnest Rock between us and the Elgin Rock, a bare white fang which marks the approach to the inner channel. The boat was now hidden from view. Presently the Washtub's paddle wheels ceased to revolve and she hove-to, two cables' length from the Birdsnest Rock. The gig was ordered out, and Bramall and I, with several 'Aquatentials,' went in her. The soldiers rowed; long practice had made them skilful in handling boats. We soon reached the Birdsnest Rock and rowed slowly round to the south side. We all wanted to look into the cave, but, of course, from the outside we could see nothing, just pitch blackness.

"Come on," said Bramall; "it'll be dark in less than an hour. We must pick up this boat and get back to the ship."

The men rowed leisurely, and we were half-way across to Elgin Rock when one of them remarked that the boat must

be at the Birdsnest Rock, not at the Elgin Rock. He pointed to the east. He was quite right. From the position of the boat when we first caught sight of it, it must have been more or less where we were now; but the sea was empty.

"Sunk, by Jove!" said Bramall, staring round with a puzzled expression on his red face.

"But boats don't just sink for no reason at all in a flat calm," I objected.

"Well, then, there must be a reason, and we've got to find out what it is," he replied. "Perhaps she's been smashed to pieces against the cliffs."

"That's equally impossible, surely. Even a glass boat could hardly be smashed to pieces in a sea like glass. We'd better go back and look inside the cave."

We entered the narrow tunnel, and Birdsnest Rock expanded like a cathedral over our heads. As soon as we got used to the darkness we could see moderately well. There was no sign of a boat in the cave.

"Back to Elgin Rock," said Bramall. "I thought she couldn't be here! We're wasting our time."

The low afternoon sun now shone directly on the cliffs of Elgin Rock, burnishing them to an incandescent whiteness, which dazzled us. We rowed slowly round the rock, keeping within a few oars' length. The cliffs rose vertically from what might have been a bottomless sea,

though it was not. Actually we were still on the outer edge of the coast shelf. Perhaps twenty-five miles to the west there were depths of a thousand fathoms, but we were still within the hundred fathom line. However, to the landsman at least, six hundred feet of blue water seems ample for most purposes. We looked down into a violet abyss, which soon ceased to reflect the light.

The sea rose and fell with a slow rhythmic motion against the bone-white cliffs, but no foam laced the smooth skin of the water. It was impossible to land on a vertical wall—even a baboon would have had some difficulty in climbing that pitted but perpendicular face. There was nothing to hitch a rope to, and you could not have stepped off from anything more solid than water. The idea of landing on the Elgin Rock was absurd.

Every explanation of the disappearance of the boat seemed lame or fantastic. We suggested deep-sea monsters, whirlpools, and other improbabilities; but none of them got rid of the difficulty that not only was there no boat; there was nothing at all in sight. If a seaworthy boat had capsized under mysterious circumstances, or been dashed to pieces against the cliffs, surely some flotsam would have survived! There would, I thought, be wreckage floating somewhere. After all, we were fifteen or twenty miles from the mainland, on the edge of the Indian Ocean, with nothing between

us and the coast of Coromandel but a thousand miles of deep blue sea. Even in the calmest weather boats which put out this far have oars, a rudder, nets, a mast and sail, floorboards, and all the usual native gear. If there had been an accident, we should certainly see something floating or awash. But though we scanned the sea most carefully in every direction till our eyes ached, not so much as weed, or fish, or floating hair broke the sapphire surface. It certainly was odd. The boat had simply vanished.

The sun was about to slide into the sea now, and the colours were rapidly changing; it would be dark in half an hour. An enormous yellow pantomime moon was rising.

"Well, it beats me," said Bramall. "We must have dreamed we saw a boat, that's all; yet I could have sworn—" He gave orders to the crew, and we steered a course for the Washtub.

"If the Elgin Rock were up-ended," I remarked, gazing at the cluster of spires into which the cliffs were drawn a hundred feet above our heads, "you could land on it. Those scalloped tapering minarets crowning the cliff would give some foothold."

Bramall agreed. As he pointed out, if you could climb that first twenty feet from sea level, without the aid of so much as a buttress, the rest would follow. "It rather reminds me of King's College Chapel, now I come to look at

it," he said, appraising it with the expert eye of a roof climber.

"I'm afraid you couldn't do it in socks," I replied; "it would tear the soles of your feet to ribbons."

We soon reached the Wash-tub, waiting patiently like a clumsy great whale on the surface, and went aboard. She got under way at once, and cruised slowly round the Elgin Rock, keeping about a cable's length away. Her paddles made the only furrows on that lovely surface, dark in the smouldering after-glow of sunset. Almost due south, and about a mile away, were three more bare fang-like islands, these five comprising the Pleiades, a somewhat isolated group of limestone rocks which the Indian Ocean was slowly digesting. And beyond that—nothing; nothing but sea, until you came to the fringes of the Malay Islands, four or five hundred miles away, and beyond that the South Pole.

It was now decided to run north to Palm Tree Bay, a cove about twenty miles away, where there was deep water inshore, and anchor for the night. Bramall wanted to have another hunt for the mysterious boat right away, using the ship's searchlight; but the captain pointed out the uselessness of it. "No sense in looking for a phantom boat in the dark," he said with a chuckle, and persuaded Bramall to give it up till daylight. He was almost as much mystified as we were, but less concerned

about it. His explanation took the line of least resistance, and he was convinced she was hiding in the Birdsnest cave 'all the time.' "You just didn't see her, that's all," he said.

But Bramall swore a great oath that if she had been in the cave we must have seen her; and the captain shrugged his shoulders and went down to dinner.

At ten o'clock that night we dropped anchor in Palm Tree Bay.

"Boat on the starboard bow!" sang out the officer of the watch.

I went up on to the bridge with Bramall. The mate, elbows resting on the rail, had his eyes glued to a large binocular. The rising sun was low above the horizon behind a band of greasy grey cloud, and the sea looked like beaten lead. We had hoisted the anchor before dawn, and slipped out in the half-light. The Pleiades group was a few miles ahead. We kept on our course, and presently the Birdsnest Rock stood out clearly; it had a curious stereoscopic quality—you felt as though it were really painted on the grey background of the sky, but by a simple trick of lighting had been made to stand out like a cardboard model. About two miles off and on the landward side a black speck showed up on the smooth surface of the sea. It appeared to be moving slowly.

The light was now rapidly improving and we quickly overhauled the boat, which had at

first been difficult to see against a dark background of forest. It was a Selung fishing boat all right, exactly like the one we had seen the previous evening. It was impossible to say whether it was the same one or not. But Bramall was convinced it was. "Anyhow, we'll soon find out," he said.

"How?"

"Why, by asking him, of course!"

I laughed. "It's easy to see you haven't been in the East very long, Bramall," I said unkindly. "That fellow won't understand one word of what you're saying! He'll laugh, and be awfully jolly, and as blank as the Sphinx."

"He may be innocent," said Bramall.

"I dare say he is innocent. But if so, he'll be dumber than if he was guilty, because he'll imagine things."

We were heading south-east now for the southernmost cape in Burma. Chugging along, the two paddle wheels tossing up a lot of foam, we quickly overhauled the suspect. A man stood up amidships, grinned, and waved a palm-leaf hat.

He was a Malay, probably of mixed parentage. As for the craft, it was an ordinary native fishing boat with a mast and a lateen sail, which had been hauled down since there was no wind.

The captain now gave orders to lower a boat, and the Wash-tub's engines stopped. We drifted slowly towards the Selung. We might have ordered

her to come alongside, but the captain said better see everything for ourselves unchanged.

I went with Bramall, and as we drew alongside, a grinning Malay-Chinese, squatting forward, greeted us with a "*Tabé tooan!*" There were two Selungs also, apparently asleep in the bottom of the boat. They sat up.

"Ask him where he comes from." Bramall turned to our Malay bosun.

"He says he's from Hasari, and has been out all night fishing."

"Where did he spend the night?"

This question, apparently so simple, provoked quite a long argument, and Bramall grew impatient. "What does he say?" he asked, interrupting.

"He spent the night in the boat," said the bosun, grinning.

"We shan't get anything out of him, even if he knows it, which isn't likely," I said. "The game's not worth playing at all, except on a bigger scale than this."

"All the same, we'll have a look at what's inside," replied Bramall, peering over the gunwale. The Selung boat drew rather more water than she appeared to do; she had a distinct keel. But the pile of fishing-nets in the bottom supported the man's story, which it was impossible to disprove in any case.

The three fishermen removed the nets, disclosing a floor of dirty bamboo matting. Bramall signed to them to lift it.

Their faces were quite expressionless. The compartment was filled with *bêche-de-mer*; on top of it lay the almost naked body of a dead Chinaman. I was fairly hardened to such sights, but I own the unexpectedness of it fairly made me jump.

When Bramall had got over his first surprise, he addressed the bosun crisply. "Just turn him over."

The bosun translated, but the Selungs shrank back in alarm. Not for anything would they touch the corpse. Our power to injure them was as nothing compared with the power of evil spirits.

We turned him over ourselves. There were no marks of violence.

"How did he die?" asked Bramall.

The Malay gave a faint suggestion of a shrug, as much as to say, "All men are mortal," and left it at that. It was useless to press the question. It could have got us nowhere. Bramall would report when we landed.

A tattered Chinese blue cotton jacket covered the dead man's shoulders, and in the shallow pocket was a rather neat cloth case, such as most Chinamen use for carrying a pair of chopsticks. I examined this with interest. There was only a single chopstick inside it, and I bargained with the Malay for it. I wanted it as a curio to remind me of this strange adventure. There were three Chinese characters very neatly

carved on it; one was *fu*—happiness.

After that we rowed back to the Washtub. Bramall was pensive and a little disappointed. When we first sighted the boat he felt certain that all our riddles of the previous evening were as good as solved; now the mystery had deepened. A vanished boat, a dead Chinaman—we suspected foul play, but there was not a jot of evidence, so far as we could see—and a fishing boat which had spent the night in, or close to, the Birdsnest cave. I felt the captain was probably right after all.

Slowly the Washtub's paddle wheels began to kick the water, and presently we were pushing steadily through the clear aquamarine seas towards the distant coastline, now becoming distinct. One by one the islands fell astern. The Birdsnest Rock grew lower and fainter, till finally it disappeared below the bulge of the earth. Other wooded islands dwindled to dark spots on the horizon. The sun had cleared the bank of cloud, and was climbing straight up into the sky, which was rapidly becoming white-hot brass. We went down to breakfast.

An hour later the engine-room bell rang again, and, looking out through the forward portholes, I saw we were just rounding the point and approaching the little harbour. Four or five miles away across the muddy estuary a vivid green belt backed by the blue

and silver of clouded hills in a rain-washed atmosphere marked the coast of Siam.

Several small boats were putting out to us, and the Union Jack was floating from a mast on the grassy hill above the village. The Washtub's siren gave a long deep howl.

I said good-bye to Bramall and other friends on the ship, and thanked them for a pleasant voyage.

"Sorry we couldn't show you anything more exciting," Bramall said.

"I was thrilled to the core. It has been an interesting experience."

"Well, let me know if you discover any clue to the phantom boat."

"You've seen it this morning, I'm sure of that, only — I wouldn't lose any sleep over it if I were you," I laughed.

"I won't," said Bramall.

Then I went ashore. Half an hour later from my bungalow on the hill I saw the old Washtub waddling pompously out to sea.

II.

I had just sat down to tea in my bungalow when I heard the long dull hoot of a launch. It could only be the *Pluto*; I recognised the aggressively governmental note. What was she doing down here, I wondered. I strolled across the veranda and looked out to sea over the tops of the mango trees and papayas in the hospital garden; and at that moment round the near headland came a small white launch close in. It was the *Pluto*, and she looked like a toy down there in the broad channel. I thought of the old Washtub rounding that same headland several years ago.

Finishing my tea, I walked down the grass slope to the red laterite path which skirted the hill, and so reached the waterfront.

A man dressed in a khaki shooting-suit was stepping off

the launch on to the bamboo jetty which ran out into the shallow harbour. It was Wagstaff, whom I had known since Cambridge days, and off and on in Burma, mostly up-country, for years.

"Hullo!" I greeted him. "What brings you down to this outpost of Empire?"

"Oh, I'm the new D.C. I've just taken over. I heard you were here bug hunting, so I thought I'd run down for a week-end and start inspecting my charge from the south. Glad to find you in; I was afraid you might have gone rum-running or rhino poaching. I'm doing a round of the islands while the weather's good. Bring a towel and a toothbrush. We're going out for the week-end; there's plenty of grub."

"Come on up to the bungalow while I put a few things together and warn out,"

I replied. "Then I'm with you."

Arrived at the bungalow, Wagstaff settled himself in a long chair and Sammy brought him a whisky-and-soda, while I walked about my room, throwing on to the bed this and that as the thought struck me: a novel, glare glasses, a pair of sandals, a camera, two towels. The list did not include a dinner-jacket, and few of the things one would pack in a suitcase in London for a week-end in the country found a place in the collection.

"It's a good job you arrived when you did," I told Wagstaff. "I was going up the coast road to bag a tiger this evening."

"Has it done any damage?"

"Not much as yet. I only heard of it yesterday. It can wait. What about liquor?"

"There's beer. Bring a bottle of whisky if you like."

"This is all I've got left," I said, pouring him out another drink. "Where are we going first? Over the other side?"

'Over the other side' meant across the estuary to Renrut on the Siamese coast, where you could buy good whisky for five rupees a bottle.

Wagstaff grinned. "I'm on duty. A D.C. can't go marching into Siam in that high-handed fashion like you or any other globe trotter." (I winced.) "It's against etiquette."

"Oh, it doesn't matter, only—that's my last bottle of whisky," I said pointedly.

"So I gathered," he laughed. "And if ever I catch you

smuggling whisky, my boy, you'll be up in my court on the mat. What d'you think I keep an excise inspector here for!"

"I can't imagine! But you won't catch me, so don't worry, old thing. However, so long as whisky is necessary for health—which means as long as the English rule their tropical possessions—and costs twelve rupees a bottle here and five rupees a bottle six miles off, the price will find its own level; in that respect at least it is like water. Wouldn't you rather I smuggled an occasional bottle—I don't drink much as you know—than that I bought it from a bootlegger here at seven or eight rupees?"

"You're a plausible devil," laughed Wagstaff. "Well, go your ways. But we can't go to Renrut tonight, that's certain; so I'm afraid you'll have to make do with half a bottle till I've gone and you can make other arrangements. We'll run out to Firefly Bay and lie there for the night; it's a perfect place for a swim. Tomorrow we'll visit the Birdsnest Rock and have a look at the cave; I want to see what old Lim Song's doing there. Nothing much to see really, but it's a quaint old stack. Ever been there?"

I said yes, once, during the war. I would like to go inside it.

"Come on, let's start. It'll be dark in two hours."

We walked back to the harbour, and Wagstaff called for

the *serang*, who was sitting in one of the little native shops sipping tea, and we went aboard. There was Abdul, the cook, and a lascar named Mohamet.

"Abdul, Mohamet, and the *serang* mess together quite happily," Wagstaff explained; "that's why I didn't bring Rama. He's orthodox and low caste, and the Muslims won't eat with him. It means another mess. There's no room for schisms on the *Pluto*—it's a squash anyhow, as you know." Daylight was shortening up as the *serang* started the wheezy old engine running—the *Pluto* burned wood and developed an uncertain and varying number of horse-power. The screw began to churn beneath us, and we went out through the lane of small native fishing boats and buoys towards the channel. Presently we rounded the headland, and the Indian Ocean lay in front of us, calm as a mill-pond in the lilac gloaming. A setting moon cast a faint squiggle of silver where its beams caught the ripples.

"Firefly Bay, *serang*. You'd better take the outer course and come in again between Destiny Island and the Drum Rock."

"*Ji ham janta*" ("Very good, sir, I know"), grunted the *serang*, and put the wheel hard over. We headed north-west.

"Hullo!" I said. "How do you come to be so intimate with this part of the world? Have you been in the Archipelago before?"

"Yes," he replied. "When

I first came out. I spent a year here before I went to the frontier."

We were actually on the Siamese frontier. But to the Englishman in Burma the 'frontier' means the China frontier.

Now we were chugging along at our full speed, and Wagstaff called for dinner. "We'll dine early and let the men turn in when we reach Firefly Bay."

The *Pluto's* cabin was just big enough for two. We sat on our bunks, and our heads were just below the skylight, which rose only two feet above the gunwale. Through the cabin door we could see the lace of our wake unrolling in an endless band; a brilliant star, rising over Further India, twinkled like a diamond splinter. There was still a blush in the Western sky where the sun had gone down, and the moon was now dipping one horn into the indigo ocean away in the south-west.

"What an ideal night!" I murmured, and began almost unconsciously to hum one of the Indian Love Lyrics. Abdul started to lay the table.

Wagstaff was peering into the pale sky to count how many stars he could see now. "Did you know that if you were on the moon you could see the stars just as clearly by day as by night?" he said. "The earth would be an enormous orange globe swimming through space."

"Where did you read all that, Waggars?" I asked in surprise. This was a new side

to his learning, for he had been a classical scholar at Cambridge.

"Oh, I saw it at the planetarium in New York," he replied modestly. "It's the most marvellous place you ever saw. Why isn't there a planetarium in London, the capital of the greatest empire in the world! I tell you, Bunny, America is streets ahead of us in education. I sat in a cool lecture theatre on a hot summer's afternoon and saw the heavens just as they would appear to an inhabitant of the moon, only there aren't any, because, of course, you couldn't live on the moon. A lecturer, with a pleasant voice and a sense of humour, explained the whole thing clearly. The reason we can't see the stars by day from the earth is simply because our dense atmosphere so scatters the light that it dazzles us. But the moon has no atmosphere, so you can."

I knew what he meant.

Then Abdul brought in the dinner, and we talked of many things: of that Chinese frontier which so few men know; of jade and jade smugglers, and opium; and of the strange bowmen of Burma who inhabit the remotest mountain fastness near the mysterious source of the Irrawaddy. A bluish-white incandescence rose beneath our stern and trailed away in a road of unconsuming fire, which floated and faded out suddenly like those stars shot out of rockets. I had never seen such phosphorescence.

About nine the engine bell rang, and we slowed to half-speed. The *Pluto* began to turn in a wide half-circle.

Wagstaff got up from his bunk—we had not yet undressed—and went out on to the cabin roof. It was a brilliant night and deliciously cool.

"Going in now, *serang*?"

"*Ji, sahib.*" He pointed to a black hump clearly visible on the port bow against the star-dusted sky. It was Destiny Island.

"Good." Wagstaff turned to me. "Coming back into the inner channel you must keep well up towards Destiny to give the Drum Rock a wide berth. *She* isn't so easily seen at night. We're pretty close to Firefly Bay now."

We continued at half speed, while dark shapes loomed up now to port, now to starboard, and presently right ahead. There was no danger; the broad lanes of water showed up clearly. It is never very dark in the Archipelago except on nights of storm. The *Pluto* drew very little water.

Now the engine slowed to quarter speed and presently stopped altogether; we drifted gently in. The *serang* was sounding with a bamboo pole.

"*Sare ek! Sare ek! . . . Bas.*" The anchor fell with a plop into eight feet of limpid water close to the shore, and we were hooked up for the night. I could distinguish a wavy line of dark forest: between it and the lighter sea

was a narrow white band, such as might have been ruled down the middle of a motor road. It was the coral beach. Firefly Bay deserved its name. It sparkled with fire-beetles, which dimmed and flashed their lights in unison as they danced aerial reels. It is the finest Lido in the Archipelago.

"Well, I'll turn in," I said; and Wagstaff agreed we might be able to sleep if we split a bottle of beer first.

Next morning we were up with the sun. The soft beauty of the scene almost took my breath away. A thin nacreous haze overlay the water, and the three or four near islands stood waist-deep in it, only their summits clear. The sky was aquamarine. Abdul brought *chota hazri*; and while we drank our tea we watched the changing lights as the sun rose straight up over the mainland mountains and the mist curdled and dissolved.

Half an hour later we pulled ashore in the tiny gig we carried over the stern. We had our towels, nothing else. It was a marvellous beach, and we spent two hours bathing in the crystal water and lolling on the warm coral strand. Tropical coasts usually hold out the threat of murderous weapons lurking for the unwary: terrific spiny sea-urchins, stinging jellyfish, knife-edge coral rocks, and the sinister creatures of the fetid mangrove swamps, such as tree-climbing fish. If there is mud, the ever-present fear of saurians makes one shiver;

when the water is clean, one suspects sharks. Rarely is bathing safe outside an enclosure—and not always inside. Big sharks have been known to come in over the top of a *paggur* on an unusually high tide, and to be left trapped as the tide ebbs, with terrible consequences to the first bather who dives unsuspecting into the pool.

But at Firefly Bay, with only six to eight feet of water over a flat sandy bottom for well over half a mile from the shore, between two rocky headlands, we were safe. Big sharks never venture into shallow water, and dogfish do not matter.

We lazed very comfortably through half the morning. Soon after ten o'clock it began to grow too hot to be comfortable, and Wagstaff suggested breakfast. We could run out to the Birdsnest Rock in the late afternoon.

So we returned to the launch and Abdul produced a good breakfast, to which we did full justice—we were hungry after all that sea and air. Presently we were threading our way between the islands towards the open sea. Behind us the coast ranges, twenty miles distant, stood up sharply, tier behind tier, dark against the luminous sky. Soon we reached the outer fringe of islands, and the Indian Ocean opened immeasurably before us. We steered two points south of west, and an hour later sighted the Birdsnest Rock,

with the Elgin Rock close beside it.

It did not take long to reach the black entrance to the sea cave. Although fifteen or twenty feet high, it looked ludicrously small in that great white limestone tower bristling with sharp points like a Gothic building.

The launch came slowly up to within twenty or thirty yards of the entrance, and her engine was stopped; she had enough way to take her right up under the cliff, and the *serang* fended her bows off with a boat-hook. We jumped into the gig, and pushed ourselves into the narrow black jaws of the cave while the launch backed away. The water was too deep to cast anchor, and she just lay off, rocking gently.

Squeezing through the passage, one felt rather than saw (for it was pitch dark, coming in from the glare) that the island was just a hollow shell. Gradually, as we grew accustomed to the gloom, we began to see faintly, thanks to the sunlight which streamed through the entrance. The walls receded and we had to use the sculls. We could hear the soft plop-plop of the waves, but the water was black as ink. We were in a vast cathedral.

"There's a landing-place somewhere," said Wagstaff. "Keep along the left-hand wall."

"We'll see better in a few minutes," I replied. "After all, we're close to the open sea."

I rounded a sentinel of rock and, turning the boat's head, pointed to a flame of white light as the entrance swung into full view again. A faint twilight now filled the cavern, and I rowed across to a rock platform in one corner. Stepping on to this, we tied the painter to a rough bamboo ladder which stood against the cliff, and set out to explore.

We clambered up a succession of ledges of diminishing size, reached the top platform, and found another rickety ladder, which led up to the roof—and the birds' nests. A glimmer of light shone down from above, so I guessed there was a hole in the roof somewhere, but it was invisible. The platform seemed to be covered to a depth of several inches with a soft powdery substance; it made a delightful carpet in which we sank almost ankle deep.

"What on earth is it?" I asked, picking up a handful; it was quite dry, but curiously unctuous.

"It's the droppings of swallows for hundreds of generations, I suppose, and bats. Sort of guano," Wagstaff replied. "It's funny when you come to think of it that the smart Chinese should have discovered this place and overlooked the most valuable product in it. He removes the nests every year, which are worth nothing—except, of course, to the epicures of China. But this earth, I believe, is invaluable to the whole

world. I have a theory——” and Wagstaff went off on to his idea that the world is suffering from nitrogen starvation, and that here was one of the finest nitrogenous manures in unlimited quantity to be had for nothing except the cost of removal. He was wrong, of course, and I told him that nowadays there was no shortage of available nitrogen. It could be obtained from the air in unlimited quantities.

But Wagstaff was unconvinced.

“Richer in easily available nitrogen than anything you can make,” he said, “and just going to waste. D’you notice the faint musty smell in here? That’s ammonia. Proof positive, my boy. It would be worth anyone’s while to collect that stuff by the sackful and ship it to the mainland.”

We returned as we had come and found the launch waiting for us just outside the entrance. The brilliant light made me blink.

“Home, John!” said Wagstaff to the *serang* as he started the engine. “Oh! We’ll just run round the Elgin Rock. You know there are some queer stories about this place, Bunny.”

“What sort of stories?”

“About boats being drawn under by sea monsters, or disappearing down submarine drains—or immense whirlpools.”

“That’s odd!” I mused.

“You know I did one trip in the old Washtub—she’s broken

up now. There was gun-running. One day we spotted a boat just about where we are now. No deception. When we came up to the place she had disappeared; simply vanished! Sunk? Not a sign! No stir in the air, no spar in the sea. Boats don’t usually sink like stones in a flat calm. A mystery of the sea.”

“You must have dreamed it!” said the practical Wagstaff.

“Dreamed it nothing,” I replied tartly. “Why, you’ve just been telling me yourself that there are strange stories about this place. What about your sea monsters! Anyhow we all saw the boat, and we couldn’t just have dreamed it, because about six hours later we saw her again!”

“She reappeared, did she! In the same spot?”

“At least we thought she did! But it wasn’t her—or if so, she was only carrying *bêche-de-mer*—and a dead Chink. I remember the Chink particularly, because we turned him over to see if there were any marks of violence. He had one of those little cases in his pocket containing a single bone—or more likely ivory—chopstick, with Chinese characters minutely and exquisitely carved on it. I’ve never seen anything quite like it before. I bought it for a rupee.”

“And had he been murdered?”

“If so, he showed no signs of it. We never solved the mystery.”

Wagstaff looked thoughtful. "That's curious," he said and pursed up his lips.

The Elgin Rock was now close, and the *Pluto* was able to go almost up to the cliff. However, we stood off, and after cruising round once to get a good view we lowered the boat and went right in under the cliff. We pulled round a second time very slowly, taking our time. But we had not missed so much as a ledge one could stand on.

I sculled leisurely. We were approaching the launch, when I stopped and looked at the water in amazement.

"Good heavens! Of all the extraordinary things! What's the meaning of that?"

"What's the meaning of what?" said Wagstaff, gazing out to sea.

"Not there. Here, right below us."

Wagstaff looked down and uttered a low whistle. "Well, I'm damned," he said; "I never noticed that."

We were twenty-five or thirty yards from the white cliff. All round us, as far as the eye could reach, the sea was a deep gentian blue. But immediately under the boat's keel, within a circle of eight or ten yards diameter, it was a pale luminous green! The effect was extraordinary. I had never seen the sea quite that Nile-green before; but more strange than the colour was the fact of this green globe in the midst of the limitless blue water, a shallow pool floating in a vast deep lake. It

did not make sense! But even as I gazed, Narcissus-like, into the pale-green mirror, something was happening.

"It's growing larger!" I said excitedly. "Look! By Jove, here's your *maëlstrom*! It'll begin to spin round and round in a minute! We'd better get out! I'm sure it's growing larger."

"It's growing lighter!" said Wagstaff, "*lighter*!"

"Why, it's being illuminated from below, from the sea-bed itself!" I shouted. "It isn't possible! It's stupendous!"

We hung our heads over the gunwale (did I say it was a flat calm?) and stared, fascinated, into the pale hole in the sea. All round the boat, for a distance of several yards in every direction it was growing brighter and greener every minute. Something astonishing was happening, or going to happen. We waited, almost breathless with excitement.

Suddenly I happened to look up as a dark shadow came into the tail of my eye. The boat had drifted; we were right under the cliff. I took up a scull, and was about to fend off when I noticed what looked like a hole in the rock or a culvert; it was just awash, and from it streamed a fierce light! The riddle was solved!

So that was it! The rock was not merely hollow, like the Birdsnest Rock: it was hollow like an atoll. Only it was an atoll eighty or a hundred feet high! It was an empty, roofless shell, and the shell wall

was pierced below high-tide level by a tunnel not more than twenty or thirty yards long. It made a sort of natural culvert. All that sunshine which was streaming down was not just being reflected back from bare white rocks, but was illuminating a central lagoon, like a crater; and at a certain state of the spring tide one shaft of light came out through the tunnel and lit up a patch of sea from below. By an extraordinary coincidence we had just happened to glide over the illuminated patch at the right moment. Our luck was certainly in!

"The tide's still falling," I said, pointing to the hole. "Look!"

The tunnel entrance had grown larger. Twenty minutes later, our heads flush with the gunwale and twisted sideways, we could look right through the opening and see white cliffs and water and daylight beyond.

"Come on!" shouted Wagstaff, who was as excited as a boy. "We must go in! Quick!"

The tunnel was perhaps ten feet wide. Lying almost flat in the bottom of the boat, with an overhead clearance of a bare foot, we pushed our way through against a current which was beginning to set strongly from the lagoon. The keel scraped several times, and we bumped heavily against the side. Once we almost jammed, but we got through and emerged joyfully into the 'crater.'

Above us was the blue sky, beneath us water of a still deeper blue; while all round us towered the fluted white walls, which were crenellated and carved into fantastic shapes. A marine fairyland!

The lagoon was roughly circular, about sixty yards in diameter, with thick chiselled walls of white-hot limestone. One or two small coves afforded good hiding-places, and there was even a beach at the far end. A few *Dracænas*, screw-pines, and *Cycas* tried to conceal some of the rocks' nakedness.

"What a perfect place for a dip," I remarked, when my awe had subsided somewhat. Even now I was afraid to speak loudly. "Kotick, the white seal, never found such a haven in all his little life." I stood up to dive overboard, laughing exultantly.

But Wagstaff caught me by the ankle. "Not on your life!" he said. "Are you crazy?"

"What's up, Waggors?"

"Don't go in. You can't see the bottom. It may be a mile deep."

"What if it is! I can swim in a mile of water as easily as in six feet, only in that case it won't be so warm. Nothing can get in through the culvert."

"You mean nothing can get out! The biggest man-eating shark in the Indian Ocean may live in this bottomless hole."

He was quite right. Of course sharks could get in or out at most states of the tide,

and besides, a family of sharks might have taken up their abode here. Wagstaff pointed to the passage, the entrance to which yawned black and dripping. "And if anything does happen to be inside, well——" He finished the sentence with a shrug, and taking a scull began to stir up a raft of floating seaweed.

Suddenly there was a flash under the surface as though a sword blade had cleft the water, and a small shark whipped out towards the entrance. Unable to escape, it turned and disappeared in deep water. I gave up all idea of bathing.

We now sculled across the lagoon to the cove, which ran up into the thickness of the wall, and landing on the narrow beach hauled up the boat. Here the cliffs were low and broken; it was easy to climb up almost anywhere, but so sharp were the edges that we had to wear shoes. We began to clamber up towards a ledge. We might, I thought, reach the top of the cliff and look down on to the Indian Ocean. There was a gaunt and veteran screw-pine growing in a crevice, and towards this we directed our steps. Wagstaff was behind, and I sat down under the Pandan, though it gave no shade.

I saw Wagstaff bend down. "Hullo! What's this?" he said, and picked up something.

"What?" I asked.

"Nothing." He stooped again, looking curiously at the honey-combed rock.

"You see how this came about," I said. "It was just like the Birdsnest Rock originally. The sea made a cave, and then ate out the guts of the rock from within. Scooped it clean like a melon, till only the rind was left. Finally, even the roof fell in, and you got this lagoon in a spiked crater, with a single passage leading to it."

"And I thought it was the crater of a submarine volcano!" said Wagstaff, laughing. "But, of course, the rock's limestone."

The amazing thing was that we should have found the entrance by chance. The passage being generally under the sea is rarely visible; it needs the combination of a spring tide, a flat calm, and a sunny day before it reveals itself—and then only to a person who sails right over the green pool. But it must be well known to many of the Selung and Malay fishermen.

"Somebody discovered this before us, Waggers," I said.

"Yes," he replied thoughtfully, sitting down on a sharp rock and leaping like a steer. "Somebody did discover it before us." He put his hands in his pockets, and seemed to be staring at the rocks all around us.

An idea struck me. "I wonder——" I said suddenly.

"What do you wonder?"

"Nothing. Well, then, given those conditions, if you are on the spot at the right time you see this pale-green calyx where the light shines through

from below, clasped in a violet sea. I don't suppose there's more than an hour between the first exposure of the cave and low water when you can pass through the tunnel. You saw how the current was setting out of the lagoon as we came in."

"Good heavens!" shouted Wagstaff, jumping to his feet and nearly overbalancing on the sharp rocks, "we've been here an hour already. You're right. We'd better get out while we can. The tunnel's probably dry now."

"I shouldn't worry, Waggers," I said. "If it is dry we can lift the boat; it's only twenty or thirty yards."

Wagstaff looked at me sadly. "You are an ass, Bunny—sometimes. If the tunnel's dry we can lift or push the boat through, as you say. But what if the tide's turned and the flood comes through so fast we can't make any headway against it? *Or are jammed in the tunnel on a rising tide?* Had you thought of that?"

I glanced round the lagoon. We were safe here at any rate. There was no danger of being caught, however high the tide rose, since we could scramble up the stepped-back cliffs almost anywhere. But to be trapped in the tunnel, looking out to the open sea and watching the green waves roll relentlessly in, higher and higher, till the tunnel was filled to the roof—that was different.

"Of course if you really want to spend eight or nine hours here, I don't mind waiting

till the next tide; but the beds aren't soft. Otherwise I think we'd better get a move on."

We were scrambling down the cliff towards the boat as he spoke. Now we pushed off and made for the entrance. There was no question of the tide coming in; the floor of the tunnel was almost dry. Ducking our heads, we looked through and saw the launch in a halo of light framed in the dark rocks of the entrance. Behind it glittered the Indian Ocean.

We rowed across the lagoon, but just as we got to the entrance the thin stream, which was running quite fast, seemed to falter, trickle away, and cease. The water in the lagoon was level with the lip of the tunnel. Our boat sent a wave over, and we saw it flow away. It was like water running out of a bath. Until the last few drops are disappearing, one scarcely notices the rake.

We lifted the boat on to the ledge. What astonished us was the bed over which we had successfully navigated the boat coming in. No wonder we had bumped and scraped on the bottom of the shallow stream; for it was a mass of branching coral of all shapes and sizes and colours.

We looked at each other and laughed.

"Well, we can wait here an hour or two till the tide rises and floats us out, or we can get down to it and carry her through," Wagstaff remarked,

mopping his brow. "Which do you prefer?"

"Oh, let's put our shoulders to it. It won't be difficult."

But it was, and we made heavy weather of it from the start. When we had lifted the boat on to the ledge we had dumped her into a pool, where she almost floated; but the pool had now emptied itself seawards, and we had to lift her over large chunks of prickly coral right from the start. Dropping her into another pool, we could not get her head round an inch, so we lifted her again and dragged her over a weed-covered rock. Then my fingers slipped, and I let my end down with a bang.

"Careful, or she'll stove in on these rocks. We don't want to spring a leak and founder in front of the *Pluto*."

It was hard work but not very difficult, until a few seconds later I felt a sharp stabbing pain in the instep—I had removed my shoes and socks. I let out a screech.

"Damn! I've trodden on one of these sea-urchin brutes and run a knitting-needle into my foot," I said, and stopped.

"Let's have a look. Yes, you certainly have." Wagstaff pulled it out, a long brittle spine, sharp as a needle; but I was very lame and in considerable pain.

"I always thought that kind went out with the Jurassic some time ago," I said. "When I studied geology, I remember seeing fossils with quills like that. They lived on amicable

terms with ammonites and belemnites and——"

"Hittites and Jebuzites and Amalakites?"

"No, it was before their time. Come on." We lifted the boat again, and after a little rough-and-tumble with the coral barrage reached the exit. Gently we lowered the precious boat into the sea; the tide seemed to be just on the turn.

The *Pluto* was almost alongside, and a few strokes took us to her. We climbed aboard; the gig's painter was made fast to our stern rail, and the engine bell rang. Slowly we turned, leaving an arc of bubbling water in our wake, and headed east.

We were rather silent over tea. Presently Wagstaff said—

"So that explains everything. Another romance shattered! No deep-sea monsters, no deep-sea vortex, just a cave!"

"But I thought it was rather romantic anyhow, for it was a submarine cave. And what could be more unforgettable than the green pool which led to the lost lagoon behind those tall white Gothic spires! The first vision through the tunnel was like a glimpse of paradise."

"Oh, it was interesting enough, but it explains away too much."

"You think it explains away the vanished boat?"

"I'm sure of it," said Wagstaff quietly.

"But if the jade hole in the lapis lazuli sea was there, why

didn't we see it?" I persisted. I wanted to think *my* mystery of the sea was still unsolved, at anyrate.

"Simply because you never got near enough. You wouldn't see the green patch unless you were right over it. The boat just got through on the flood tide. It's perfectly simple."

"Well, you may be right. It's a pity. By the way, what was it you picked up in the cove?"

"Oh, that!" Wagstaff put his hand in his pocket and took out an object which he laid on the table in front of me.

It was an empty rifle cartridge.

"Does that suggest anything to you, Bunny?"

"A rifle cartridge! It suggests rifles, of course."

"And so, by extension, gun-running."

As Wagstaff said, the lagoon was just the place for a small boat shifting arms from one island to another, to make for if spotted, so long as the tide served.

We headed back for the harbour and landed.

In the short but luminous tropical dusk we walked through a wave of fireflies to the bungalow.

Next morning Wagstaff left me to return to his duties up the coast. Presently I heard the *Pluto's* magisterial hoot as she disappeared round the headland.

GUARDED TREASURES.

BY W. F. GRAHAM.

IN most households there are certain drawers and cupboards, guarded with jealous care, that contain treasures more precious to those who own them than all the world's wealth besides. I mean those drawers and shelves that hold things worthless to the common eye, meaningless unless you have the key to what they represent in memories and associations. I have just been through a collection of this kind, and some of the relics date back so many years that it would tax my memory to fit them to their proper incidents were it not for the labels and notes attached. We do like to fancy ourselves practical and unromantic, so that tying up and labelling serves as some apology for the absurd weakness of hoarding rubbish in a locked cabinet. An orderly method of arrangement, as though one were keeping a scientific record, is a corrective to sentimentality, and a scrupulous regard for chronological sequence a tribute to a sane and business-like mind. And yet what a deplorable attempt at self-deception; affection stands betrayed in the folding of a paper, pride in the knotting of a string.

Yes, most of these cherished valuables are tied up with string. Just ordinary string, with luggage labels attached,

because the originators and donors were not in those days connected in anybody's mind with packets that demand blue ribbon to bind them, or withered flowers and gloves in layers of tissue paper. Schoolboy and schoolgirl immaturities, in fact: letters, gifts, and a few articles rescued from oblivion and neglect, that seemed to possess some excellence in conception or design, tokens of genius struggling to express itself in something a child had made and thrown away. There are letters: Sunday letters, written by John at his prep. school, generally containing a request, a reminder that his birthday is near, or a diplomatic hint that So-and-so is rather nice. Other boys have roller-skates, mechanical toys, 'Skybirds.' All desirable and enviable possessions, and very nice to have. These letters, and headmaster's reports, present contrasting views on essentials—at times conflicting views—and my sympathies are all with John, the footballer who hates sums. Red-headed tough, his ill-spelt and sprawling efforts to cover two sheets of note-paper are eked out with sketches. "Me playing football," and in case you should be in any doubt, there is a dotted line from his toe to the ball, neatly topping the bar. "Me swimming." "Me

boxing." The complete egoist, who knows the value of a personal touch when writing home.

Sometimes he has been put to it to find material at all, and the result is heavy padding in the form of lists. He gives the names of all the boys in his class, in the eleven, or what places are out of bounds. "The privet garden," "the hostile walk," "the tour." One gathers these are the headmaster's private garden, the path leading to the staff hostel, and the water-tower. In one letter he observes of a stormy night, that he was unable to sleep owing to a 'rattling widow' in the dormitory. Unconscious humorist; but when in a postscript he asks how all the animals—and you—are, it shows where his heart is, and how thoroughly in the right place that heart remains.

What a variety of scenes those letters bring flickering up from the past. It is as though one kicked the ashes of a bonfire, and each spark as it springs to life is a glowing incident, recaptured and then lost amid a stream of kindred sparks. Half-term and the school sports; rows of seats in the shade of spindly lime-trees, and an open, green expanse of playing-field, over which small boys gambol like a flock of newly shorn lambs. There is the same pinky-white effect, and their limbs are flung abroad with a lamb's ungainly grace that somehow contrives to embody the poetry of motion. There is a touch of academic

gravity about the proceedings, a slight air of repression amongst the parents and guardians, as though their own schooldays were so vividly recalled that they almost forget their dignity of years and parentage, unconsciously reverting to the days of discipline and extra drill. They are rather jealous of one another and for the honour of their own sons. You see them eye furtively a neighbour's offspring, obviously comparing him with Billy or Jack, whose perfections are just a trifle dulled among so many duplications of their kind. And boys are very critical of their people. You have to be well dressed in order to pass muster; and if father's bags are wrong, or mother wears an unbecoming hat, the whole joy of an afternoon is marred for the owner of such careless folk.

Fathers are the knock-about and clowns of the occasion when they enter for their special race. The lambs save up their vocal energies for this, and their baaings and booings are partly encouraging and partly sarcastic as the lumbering herd of their progenitors comes pounding and purple up the course. Their back-view and exhibition of braces makes one blush with shame, and if a father tumbles down the earth seems to tremble. There are always the humbugs, who, limping, vow they will never make such fools of themselves again. Till next time, they might add, because, as sure as fate, next year the same men, or their facsimiles, will puff and blow

and strive over the same ground for their family's honour and the honour of all old boys.

Prize-giving, time-hallowed jokes, and the Head's eulogies about the school. The imported celebrity, benignly fatuous, scratching his back against the pavilion door-post, and the rows of glittering cups. Parents should be impressed with a sense of gratitude and humility, and I daresay they are, but the little boys yearn for strawberries and cream. The sports day is their one opportunity for unrestrained surfeit under the ægis of immutable custom. One staggers away with a feeling of repletion after watching them, and John's school bill has an item for medical attention. Four more weeks till the holidays; two more weeks; five days, and then a hiatus till next term. And so the series continues, from prep. to public school, but no further. Letters, after that, lose their gem-like quality that entitles them to a place among guarded treasures.

Models are interesting things, especially if you have no head for mechanics, and here the explanatory label is very useful. A brass screw means nothing in itself; it might have come adrift from anything, but when you read that it was turned by John, its aspect at once becomes changed and priceless. If you are a connoisseur in brass screws, which I am not, you will admire the thread and other technical details; but even an ignoramus must agree that John has in him the makings of an engineer.

His step-ladder is too unwieldy for a shelf, but none the less a treasure. As a practical aid to ascension it is a questionable convenience; for owing to some structural defect it topples sideways when you get half-way up. It may be the thing has feelings that object to being trod on, and a proper pride in its aloof position as a treasure apart; but at anyrate it will not accommodate itself to man's needs unless supported firmly by assistants. A step-ladder that requires three people to manage it is inconvenient, and so John's ladder stands against the wall in a back passage. The instructor's pencil marks are still visible, and the maker's name branded upon the top-most step with a red-hot poker.

Among the more whimsically pathetic things in the treasure cupboard is Anne's wool-mat, or kettle-holder—it might be either—and its label simply states that it was made by Anne. Gaudy horror; I can imagine the pain it must have cost my long-legged friend to complete this square of red and blue. Anne, bless her, was never a person you would naturally connect with plain and patient needle-work. She lacks the temperament that delights in sewing, and sensitive hands were made for better things, she thinks. I speak of her in the present tense, because she has not changed much, and still prefers a horse to a sampler. They used to tell her she would never make a good wife unless she learned to sew on

buttons, which husbands are, apparently, for ever bursting, or a good mother unless she could darn socks. There seems to me no logic in this argument, and undomesticated Anne is a distinct improvement on the pattern against which her nose was so ruthlessly rubbed in childhood.

The woolly thing—call it a kettle-holder—was worked as a birthday present for her father, but subsequently altered to a Christmas present, because it seemed this strange parent was not born on a birthday. A surprise it was to be and a dead secret till sprung; but that kind of secret takes a deal of hiding, and even when hid is always fraught with the terror of a stumpy needle. Then arm-chairs and sofas are not good places to chose for its concealment, so when her father swore and flung the secret out of the window he had some excuse for acting irritably. Anne wept, because he had taken her gift too soon in the wrong spirit, and in the wrong place. She let it hang for quite a time in the bush where it had fallen, a vivid blossom out of season, but in the genial warmth of Christmas preparations her spirits revived, so that she fished it out and finished it, and father received his surprise in many wrappings with love from Anne. He called it beautiful, and straight-way hid its glory in the treasure cupboard. He should have hung it on a nail beside the fire. Kettle-holders should hang thus whether you have a kettle or

not, and nowhere else, however honourable, is equally appropriate. The next thing Anne made was a rabbit-hutch for herself.

I have some personal treasures that never found their way into a cupboard. They are not for common eyes to gloat upon, and they are not love letters. Indeed, the theme of love has no place in those verses Anne used to pen and leave upon my table. I used to find them, with the simply written query, "Any good?" So like Anne, and no other reference was ever made to them by her or by me. My job was to type what she had written, and to add a word or two of comment; then leave the fair copy in her room, where she would find it under the feet of an ebony elephant. I always kept the originals.

Her notions ran in harmony with mine even in those days, and her ideas of bliss made 'Paradise' seem a very wholesome place. To feel the wind in your face as you gallop across country; to hear the music of the pack, and to know that you are on a perfect line. No poetic flights of fancy: nothing but flights of rails, good, sound fences, and Lucy Grey taking them in her stride with never a mistake; Anne, with her bowler hat well down upon her ears, her long legs gripping with spider-like tenacity. I do not know that she made a beautiful picture; but it was bliss—pure bliss—and all technically correct. Next to that comes a hot

summer day and the wide, blue sea to splash in. Legs and arms again, and a shiny-capped head. An athletic realm this paradise, the kind of heaven prayed for through the prim weeks of term.

There is a place among the hills I sometimes think must be the inspiration of Anne's poetic moods: a tarn set deep among boulders in a cup-shaped hollow. It is within walking distance, but it is better to ride; Anne on Lucy Grey, myself on the staid horse, Guardsman. You follow a beck, mounting the fell-side through bracken, till you come to purple tops that stretch to the horizon, an endless expanse of heather and red grass, from which rise piles of rock, thrown together as though for giant road-mending. The air is aromatic with the scent of bog-myrtle—gale they call it—and the heather feeds many bees. At first glance it is a monotonous land, afterwards enchanting, because you never know what lies hidden by the next fold, and the fells delight in springing surprises on you. They do not flaunt in their beauty, but keep it in little dips and 'swires' to catch and hold the eye, contrasts to wider, sterner views.

You find the tarn quite suddenly, lying in wait for you, as it were, and I for one could never resist its beckoning twinkle. The horses know this spot as well as we do, and never attempt to stray when off-saddled and turned loose; but nobody else seems to have discovered it. There is a flavour

of 'paradise' here, because it includes horses and water to swim in. The tarn is not exactly the sea, but there is an overhanging ledge from which you may dive, and a shingly bank on which you can bask and kick your heels. 'Little Paradise,' in fact, a concentration of many joys in small compass. And you take those joys serenely, because the fells stand round, and it would be an outrage on their majesty to shout and rush about. Your plop into the tarn must sound as like a fish as possible, and all you do must harmonise with where you are.

Anne is a far better swimmer than I am, and looks so natural here that she seems an integral part of the place, necessary to its completeness, and with unexpected gleams of elfish mockery that bring to the tip of my tongue the descriptive term, *sprite*. It gets no further, because the impression is gone so quickly, and between whiles Anne is just Anne, with a disconcerting habit of asking, "What?" and adding "Gosh!" if you are foolish enough to repeat a very silly remark. I say "Golly!" to keep her company, which tones things down to an ordinary, comfortable level between us. "Gosh! it's lovely here." "Golly, it is!" And the spirits of the place shudder till the very cotton-grass shakes its plumes in the flutter of general protest.

There is a brown stream that feeds the tarn, surprisingly deep and strong for an upland beck, and I believe Anne is

somehow in league with it. She calls it her stream, and they play together and converse, though what they talk about only the rushes and golden cinquefoil know. She never tells me, so I can but sit on the rocks and watch her being washed back into the tarn when the stream is tired of her. She gasps, and laughs, and then comes out to sit beside me. "Gosh! it's ripping." Which is followed by another laugh. "At school they used to fine us a penny every time we used that word!"

It is all a curious mixture of unacknowledged make-belief and plain every-day things, like fire-lighting and making tea, but the influence of 'Little Paradise' is rather like the stream: strong enough to catch you in its current and bear you away, in spite of your determination to be mundanely minded. We come prepared with saddle-bags, and however fairy-like the scene may be, there always comes a moment when we feel hungry. Wood-smoke does its hazy best to foster unreality, to drift across the hollow and distort the outlines of familiar objects. Its flavour, too, has a romantic tang, but it keeps the midges off as well. One is not aware of giving names to certain places, but they seem to acquire them of their own accord, so that when Anne talks of Pixie Cove I know quite well where it is. Standing Stone is where we dive from, and the Trysting Stone is where we often meet a solitary goat. He came

there out of curiosity to see what we were doing, or to keep an assignation with some friend who never turns up. The first time he scared our horses, sending them galloping home with snorts and arching tails, so that we had to follow on foot, saddles on our heads and disgruntlement in our hearts. Now, however, the animals have grown used to the sight of horns and beard among the heather, and the goat never comes nearer than the Trysting Stone, against which he pensively rubs his hairy sides. We feed him with bits from our table, fragments of bread and cigarette-ends, but he remains aloof, not in the least friendly till we have gone. Then he approaches to sniff the dead ashes of the fire and to examine minutely every spot where we have been.

I can imagine him, when the full moon sails above the fells, capering upon our diving-rock, calling to his own reflection to come up and dance, and summoning uncanny shapes from out the nooks and corners of the wild to bear him company. One must not tarry here after sunset; for then the hollow belongs to strange folk who change its character and make its air malign. In contrast I know nothing more beautiful than the bracken hillside with the evening light upon it, and the peaceful valley seen through the pass as one rides down. You do not see the beck, but you hear it all the way, as by degrees you exchange the moorland pipes and whistlings for

the tamer lowland country sounds. Old people pottering about their cottage doors and children playing in the road ; it is rather the stir of life than articulate notes. A word flashes out here and there, arresting without its context, and maybe the scraping of a fiddle. These stone-built northern hamlets seem bleak and stern to strangers. There is no obvious warmth in thatch or mellow brick to catch the eye. Few creepers grow upon the walls, and the gardens are patches of utility. Yet, for those who have time to make a leisured study of such places, there is a peculiar charm, in which colour is not lacking. Stone-crop and House-leek on the coping-stones and a polychrome tracery of lichens on the flagged roofs. A splash of scarlet from a rowan-tree and the purple lift of hills against the sky. The horses know the way. They need no guidance through the narrow street, and as we turn into the last stretch for home the beck comes leaping out to meet us, riotous in its final course before the river absorbs stream and song into its greater volume.

'Little Paradise' and the tarn, riding to and from that sanctuary among the fells, have given me a store of sweet and whimsical recollections that match those belonging to the guarded treasures at home. The delicate threads meander from shelves all through the house ; over my table where Anne leaves her verses, and past the door where John has scratched his name. Children, and the tokens

of them, meet me everywhere ; their feet have left indents on the nursery door, and their opinions of the world are chalked on office window-ledges. You come on such inscriptions years afterwards in unexpected places, outlined on the plaster-work of dusty lofts or shrouded in the dark recesses of a turnip-house. Feelings too deep for words have here found outlet and relief. And those brief notices in toppling capitals, "Private." They are reminders of how we used to take possession of a vacant shed or box and turn it into what we were pleased to call a club. One's father had his club, so why not follow suit ? We did, imitative as monkeys, only to be ejected in favour of a sow about to farrow.

The things children collect about their private haunts give little clue to individuality, marking rather the tastes and characteristics of a people than those of a single inhabitant. Comprehensively speaking, all children collect similar objects and arrange them on much the same plan. Fragments of pottery in squares and circles, mounds of dust with grass or feathers crowning them, and always the suggestion of a geometric scheme. You might think that every child was born with an instinctive sense of art, and I believe, to a great extent, he is, and that often his acts of petty theft could be explained by a theory of subconscious need for something beautiful—something that in the fulness of time might crown an edifice. He may

develop into a man of marked integrity or remain a collector with all his primitive tendencies intensified and no longer sub-consciously employed ; but the original germ in a child's mind has nothing to do with morality, and his motives are as great a puzzle to himself as they are to you. Raiding a treasure-house under a tree root or in the attic is a heart-rending necessity at times, and you seem to lose your right to a long-lost possession when you find it cheek by jowl with something you yourself have given a brat. Such juxtaposition is utterly confounding—and disarming—for if he loves you for the one he loves you none the less for the other, you being the *fons et origo* of both. There is a communal instinct in his misty mind, and if you make a fuss he will most likely offer you his property as well as your own, with a generous disregard for ethics that causes you to feel an interfering fool, and wish to goodness there was no such thing on earth as the duty of disillusionment.

In reading moral homilies to little boys one steers uncertainly between two large, impending rocks : the danger of misrepresenting oneself, and the greater danger of misrepresenting the Deity. I think John's earthly guardians realise this, and so have hit upon a happy middle course, a disjointed, illogical mixture of reproof and affectionate raillery, through which runs, as a refrain, the spoken, or implied, assurance

of understanding. That is all that matters. No threats of punishment here or in the hereafter ; no mention of an implacable God or a pattern parent who never did such things when he was young ; simply that one word stressed—understanding, which means everything and needs no amplification.

Boys hate to seem impressed however they may feel, and the absence of immediate response is no proof of heartlessness. Baiting one's father is a modern development that means nothing, or, if anything, a kind of inverted love-token. It is difficult always to remember this, and to bear in mind that to be pursued with sticks and hunting-crops is exactly what Johns and such pests are asking for. The sight of dignity is a challenge and an affront ; to upset it the supreme form of bliss. It is, too, a revenge taken on the race of dignitaries in general, schoolmasters whom one cannot bait with impunity, and bishops who are beyond reach.

Between times comes a different John, the good companion and industrious youth. He will proclaim at daybreak his intentions and issue bulletins about his virtuous performances till dusk. He is, as a matter of fact, generally weary of excellence long before night ; but while the humour lasts he wears a halo round his scrubby head and moves in an atmosphere of praise and back-pattings. He appeals for praise and recognition, just like a dog showing off his tricks, and you pat him much as you

would pat a puppy and with the same forebodings of awful reactions to come. "John is in a virtuous mood today, so you had better look out," is a common warning, usually justified to the hilt; but the actual change, when you know the worst, is preferable to the nerve-racking suspense of anticipating that which no man can predict.

Virtue seems to jog his memory, so that he keeps asking you what has become of this or that: things he made a year ago, presents he gave you the Christmas before last. The treasure cupboard must be opened so that he may handle his gifts and achievements, assure himself of their continued existence, and draw extra light to his halo by contemplating his ingenuity and munificence in the past. Very likely he may come on something completely forgotten, and with squeals of joyful recognition hale it forth, like an old friend, pawing it reminiscently, till with feelings no longer to be restrained he blurts out, "Daddy, I love you!" Almost simultaneously he grabs a school report, peruses it with knitted brow, and grins. Those infernal dignitaries, square-toed, petty formalists intrude again, and with them Satan's imps to tickle the unsaintly portions of John's soul. The lustre of his halo fades and grows dim.

There is a gap in a man's life, between babyhood and manhood, during which he is never painted. Artists recoil from schoolboys. They are

passing through an ugly stage much better not perpetuated on canvas, and their cheeky faces decline to be transmogrified at the will and pleasure of a fellow with a brush. It is a pity, because John's colouring is good; but unless you painted him with his tongue out or cocking snooks, you would infallibly miss those characteristics that mark him and the race to which he belongs. In the hall, at the foot of the stair, hangs a picture of Anne. It represents a dream-child of surprising elegance. Long limbs have been caught in a restraint that embodies grace, and the features, though unmistakably Anne's, have a sublimated radiance imparted to them which makes of her a stranger or a revelation; you cannot decide which. The usual effect is to make you forget the high polish of the bare oak staircase.

Perhaps I have a better understanding of that picture than most people, because I have sometimes had a fleeting glimpse of the expression up on the fells beside the tarn. Those are moments when 'Gosh' and 'Golly' come lumbering to rescue me from using terms more etherial as Anne hovers above the still waters, poised with upturned face against a cloudless sky. She calls the picture her conscience done in oils, because the eyes follow her about and make her think of all the things she might have accomplished had she really been like—that. I have seen her gravely studying it, walking backwards up the stair

in order to get the full effect, and then, with a frightful grimace, dashing off to find a dog or pony—something more homely of countenance and less vaguely disquieting. In his quaint heart John keeps a sneaking admiration for this picture, and lures strangers towards it. "My sister," he remarks with careless, offhand brevity, adding, "Doesn't she look a fool?" Nobody has ever agreed, so I cannot tell how he would react if they did; but I notice he never asks other little boys the question. They would certainly say yes, and then something would have to be done about it.

Anne holds the place of honour in the hall; but under the stair, in shadowy obscurity, hangs Jupiter in the form of Minerva making love. It is rather more than bare-faced courtship, and the nymph looks a huzzy. Still, it is a good picture, and under the stair is a good place for it. Old Jennie Moffat, who clumps through life in clogs, among the hens and the family washing, has periodic desires to see "Miss Anne's picter." Anne, without being painted, is a picture in herself, Jennie maintains; with her mother's own swagger—quite a lady's walk—and anybody can see she is 'high comed.' Not 'snobby' (haughty), though the family is that old its members have every right to be so, but 'free' with poor, working bodies, having at the same time a proper regard for their self-respect and her own. A great treat for

Jennie is to be invited 'through into the house'; that is past the baize door separating the back regions from the quality. She 'lashes' her hair and washes her face for the occasion and always removes her clogs on the threshold. In stocking-feet she paddles over soft carpets with something the gait of her own ducks, noting everything, even to the suspicion of a cobweb, with sharp eyes that peer and peep into every nook and corner. In her wake she leaves a faint odour of peat-smoke and wool. I think she has some inkling of what the artist saw when he painted Anne: a dim sense that here is revealed inner truths of character, just as she herself would have described them had she been able. High-comed, swagger, snobbiness: they are all here, and a celestial sort of freeness that appeals straight to her heart. Old Jennie's praise comes in somewhat husky tones. "Weel tain," she says, and "Eh, it's like!" and stands entranced, shaking her head from side to side. "Foreign folk, likely," she remarks of Jupiter and his nymph, which is explanation enough, and needs no more.

The wind-up of her outing is a cup of tea and a recital of her physical ailments. In reality as strong as a fell-pony, she loves to pose as a dilapidated person, and her recital of symptoms is complicated by local terms. She has, too, strange names for clothing: stranger the deeper you get, which amply satisfy the needs of

modesty when she reels off the list of her "upper-coits, under-coits, smerrie-diddles, and dick-a-bobs." She is full of pride in her diseases and her wardrobe, her feats of endurance, and how she has carried on in the old way in spite of all the change about her. Jennie is no mealy-mouthed puritan, but her candid speech gives no offence; and when she slaps her knees in winding up a tale you laugh as well, knowing that beneath this rough exterior lies a perfect delicacy and fine feeling, which times of stress or sorrow bring to light.

This north country is a land of contrasts: bleak tracts of wind-swept heights, gaunt buildings and stone walls, and dales opulent in their growths of trees and well-cropped fields. Hills, bold or rounded; gaps that show misty distances barred with streaks of light; flashes of water from beck or river. And the people show just such contrasts. The bleak, gaunt aspect strikes you first; afterwards you find the softer valleys and the limpid streams. Jennie unfolds among us; burgeoons like a hardy flower; yet she looks a grim old person at her cottage door. A stone slab upon two upright stones and a tarred water-butt flank her; a string of salted herrings and a galvanised tub. Her garden path runs between potato and cabbage plots, without the vestige of an ornamental plant. Only on the roof and along the boundary wall the decorative lichens spread and stone-crops flourish.

Yet Jennie has her guarded treasures, like the rest of us: bits of things she values sentimentally; relics of her girlhood and presents from Anne and John. In her dark aumbry she keeps them, protected by much tissue-paper, seldom unwrapped to please herself, never to show to others. They are more personally private than our treasures at home, because Jennie has no craving for the praise and admiration of outsiders. There is nothing in these hoarded trifles she can share with anyone. They belong—they, their memories and associations—to her alone, and when she dies I hope they will be buried with her.

I often wonder what the ultimate fate of all those cherished odds and ends—in big or little houses—may be. In going through old boxes, drawers, and cupboards one finds a great quantity of letters, chiefly from grown-up people, but very few from children, and very rarely a child's gift. Memory is perpetuated in packets of hair, labelled as we label our wooden pen-trays and wool-mats. Births and deaths are carefully noted, but one misses the acute personal appeal of things a child has actually made itself. Samplers do not count. They are stereotyped affairs, and give no clue to character. One might as well preserve a page of neat dictation or arithmetic. Making things at school and handicrafts are modern developments, and, I suppose, useful articles produced at home were used till

they became worn out, then thrown away. At anyrate, they do not seem to have been preserved as we preserve John's masterpieces, and the only specimen from a generation before my own that I can recollect was a 'cup-and-ball' turned by my father in his early youth. It was made of walnut wood, very hard and very shiny, and nominally became my property; but it was so constantly being inquired after, and so perpetually being lost when I was asked to produce it, that I felt more like its keeper than its owner, and a bad keeper into the bargain. It has disappeared long ago, and the phantom of a little boy in braided suit may be playing with it now. Click-clack—a very silly game—but it seems to fit the epoch of a faded daguerreotype.

I take it that boys in former days had knives, but used them with discretion. Even in my time when the urge to cut and hack became insupportable, we chose obscure beams in outhouses or branches high up trees. I can find those trees now, and have been tempted to climb just to see if my initials are still there. The present generation knows no such modesty, and even Anne has carved her full name, date, and address upon the kitchen door. I will say this for them, however: they leave the trunks of trees alone, and seem to have a better regard for natural beauty than we had. Nature study was never presented to us in an

attractive form, and text-books dealt almost entirely with pistils and stamens, while any deviation was in the form of sickly verse with a moral tendency. We collected dried leaves in books, and the same sort of dry knowledge we extracted from history or algebra. Now we take nature as a pal, a playfellow, with as many fancies as a fairy-tale. Only prigs are learnedly correct; the rest of us make out of ignorance a science of our own, and invent absurdities that are just old beliefs revived in different forms. Our inventions seem spontaneous, but if we took the trouble to study and compare, we should find ourselves unconscious plagiarists, repeating words and thoughts that had their origin in pagan times. Anne's verses would have been considered pagan fifty years ago, when 'Paradise' meant a conventional heaven, and even now school-marms are not quite sure; and yet I feel that she and others like her—dear, impatient people—have a far finer, broader conception of things spiritual than ever we had at their age, or could hope to attain without them to show the way.

There is an arrow of sunlight, shot between the shoulders of two purple hills, that falls on broad steps beside the house, where the last rays always linger. The sycamores upon the lawn throw shadows across the grass, and the garden scents rise pleasantly. The doorway of the dusky hall is a frame for golden and green fields, with an uplook to the fells and

treeless wilds, where the farms look like chapels and the chapels might be farms. Their windows all have pointed arches : narrow white slits in flat, grey walls, and they seem to have been dropped haphazard as from a child's play-box. The prospect is set to music. Somebody has started to play the piano, very softly. It sounds like improvisation ; at anyrate it is not jazz, and the melody has just slipped in to fit the hour and my mood. That music was needed to save the silence from becoming oppressive and to keep one's thoughts from straying too far into the unknown that lies behind the ridges and the glowing redness of a sunset sky.

Anne, too, has been wandering in strange lands, and the melody brings her back to earth. Not altogether, because she is still left with a pensive kind of yearning. She does not quite know what she wants, so she sits in a corner of the sofa and looks—at me. It is pleasant to be wooed by Anne, even as a lay figure representing abstract ideals, and my duty is to be passive rather than responsive. I do not wish for 'Gosh' to break the spell, so I sit quite still and wait. I am delicately expectant. After a while a move towards me, and a hand slips very gently through my arm, so gently I can hardly feel it, and so shyly that I dare not stir lest it should be withdrawn. Then by degrees her fingers creep along, till they fit themselves one by one

between mine and remain there, firmly clasped, while her body relaxes till her head rests just below my shoulder. How lightly it rests ! A gossamer touch, scarcely more perceptible than a yellow sunbeam on my sleeve, and, like a sunbeam, it is warm and bright.

I glance sideways to make sure that this is really Anne, my matter - of - fact comrade among dogs and horses. It would be incredible did I not remember some moments at the tarn, when she has looked capable of that which she always stifled before it had time to materialise. The tantalising sprite has surrendered to abstract romance, and our spirits are very much in tune as we sit together. Whatever she is thinking of, it is not I. "Whiles I sits and thinks, and whiles—I sits," as the old woman said ; and were I to offer a penny for her thoughts, Anne would only shake herself and laugh, saying she did not know, which would probably be correct.

With a final chord the spell is broken. Ordinary sounds of life are heard again : the dressing-gong, John's voice as he scraps with somebody, and the scampering of paws along the passage. Anne wakes to tell me she is hungry, and her elbow asserts its angularity. I come back from dreamland with a sigh, relegating to its peculiar shelf, under lock and key, one more guarded treasure in this house of happy memories.

AN INDIAN HILL STATION.

BY J. CHARTRES MOLONY.

"Look unto the hills from whence cometh your help." Better, I think, would be "where lies your help." This thought often occurred to me as I looked up from the heat-sodden, sweltering plains to the blue mass of the Nilgiris. 'Nilgiri' means just 'blue land'; and the hills were so called because, seen from below, they are blue. The Nilgiri mass is about 35 miles long at its longest stretch, about 20 broad at its broadest, and the total area of the mass is about 957 square miles. The average height is about 6500 feet above sea level, but Dodabetta ('the big mountain' in Kanarese) is 8837 feet above sea level, and the lake of Ootacamund, the paradise of Indian hill stations, 7228 feet.

I made my first acquaintance with the Nilgiris about forty years ago. I was then a *chokra* (*anglice* 'little boy') in Indian service, and I was desperately ill. A hundred years earlier I probably should have died. For then the sick man on the southern plains must get better or go under at the place where he found himself; and I have little doubt what the outcome would have been for me. The sick man might take ship for Mauritius or the Cape of Good Hope; but the chances of finding a ship would have been

small, and of surviving the voyage perhaps smaller.

There were no such grim obstacles in my path. The Government, learning of my plight, transferred me by telegram to a nominal post in Ootacamund, and I started forth. There was a night's journey to Mettupaleiyam at the foot of the mountains; thence a 'rack railway,' one with a cogged line between the two main lines, pulled us up about 6500 feet to Coonoor. It was heavenly to feel the breezes growing cooler, to sniff the fragrant air that came through the forests, to look dizzily down gorges spanned by unguarded bridges, to see the trim coffee gardens along the hill-slopes. At Coonoor we drew clear of the forests and took tonga and the road for the open country of Ootacamund. The old tongas, I suppose, by this time have mouldered away or have been broken up for firewood—a railway now connects Coonoor and Ootacamund—but the mind of man never devised a better vehicle for these mountain roads. The tonga is (or was) a big, comfortable cart, in shape rather like a low-wheeled dog-cart. But instead of shafts there was a centre pole with an iron bar running across it at the middle. The horses, one on

each side of the centre pole, wore saddles on which was fixed an iron crutch rather like the rowlock of a boat; the iron cross-bar fitted into the crutch, and so the tonga was drawn. The ingenuity of the design (like the design of the rickshaw) was that when the centre pole was lifted parallel to the ground, the cart tended to tilt backwards. So there was no weight on the horses. We changed horses twice on the road; and the start and the changes provided thrills for nervous passengers. For it seemed to be a point of honour with tonga-owners that their horses should never be broken: at a start one animal usually reared up straight in the air, while the other tried to lie down on the road. But I suppose it was "only pretty Fanny's way," for I never heard of an accident. The gait, when we did get started, was a swinging gallop; the drivers, wild hillmen, were extraordinarily skilful at their job; the tongas were well sprung; and so we galloped gaily through 'Charing Cross,' and to the level space before the Post Office—the tongas carried the mails—where we disembarked. The wary traveller (I had been warned) struck a bargain at Coonoor with his driver to be deposited at his particular destination. For though the regulation fare from Coonoor to Post Office was not excessive—it was about ten shillings in our money—it was the driver's pleasing custom to

demand another ten shillings for carrying the traveller and his trunk perhaps a hundred yards farther.

My first night in Ootacamund I shall not forget. Instead of threshing through the night inside a mosquito curtain and on a straw-woven mat I slept snuggled up in blankets; instead of waking to the glare of the 'pitiless' sun (how well Kipling chose his adjective in his story 'With the Main Guard') I poked out my nose to see a servant bringing me a cup of scalding tea. I ate porridge for breakfast, and there was butter, real butter, not a concoction which looked (and tasted) like a mixture of axle grease and train oil. But though my heart jumped up, I quickly realised how weak my body was. I must report myself to my new official chief; and his office was about a mile away on a level road which ran between flowering banks. It took me over an hour to accomplish that mile, and two or three times I sat down on the road-bank to rest.

I have said that a hundred years earlier I probably should have died on the plains. Yet, fit and well, I should rather like to have lived a hundred years earlier, to have been the first European who walked on to the Ootacamund plateau and there found the Todas grazing their buffaloes. That man, if he had imagination, must have felt as Allan Quatermain and his companions felt when the underground stream

emerged from its tunnel and showed them the city and people of Zu-Vendis.

The Nilgiris had stood unexplored for centuries. The people of the plains had no desire to go up. The tracks—there must have been some tracks—ran through dense forests sodden with malaria; wild beasts prowled in the forests, and so did shy, unfriendly tribes—Irulas, Kurumbas, Kotas, and the like. The growing coldness was ungrateful to the plainsmen. No one suspected the existence of the open country, the Todas, and the buffaloes at the top. For if the Todas never come down *now*, when roads, carts, trains are open to them, it is very unlikely that they came down *then*.

The first attempt on the Nilgiris seems to have been made in 1602, when the Bishop of the Syrian Christians of the Roman Catholic rite sent out a search party to look for a few of his flock who had wandered away, been kidnapped, had somehow disappeared upwards and into the blue. The Syrian Christians of the west coast are interesting in that they do not owe their faith to any European missionary effort. The apostle Thomas, the doubting companion of Jesus, is said to have come to India bringing the gospel of the new religion with him. There are several Syrian sects—in fact they are a sadly contentious community—and one sect owes obedience to the Pope of Rome. But their tenets and ritual are not

quite uniform with those of Catholics scattered over the remaining surface of the world: the Mass, I understand, is said in Syrian, not in Latin.

The Bishop did not recover his wandering sheep, and for more than two hundred years to come the Nilgiris remained unattempted. In 1812 two surveyors, Keys and Macmahon, went up. The Government had in mind a sanatorium, a place where coolness, rest, refreshment might be available for Europeans in the south, and especially for European soldiers. Private soldiers perforce lived less comfortably than Anglo-Indian 'nabobs,' and the mortality among them was frightful. Keys' report was unfavourable: he declared the country to be very cold and unhealthy, and so indeed it must have seemed to a lightly clad explorer from the plains. Whish and Kinderley went up in 1818. Possibly they were exploring with a definite end in view, but more probably they were just on a shooting trip. But these earliest explorers seem to have missed the plateau and valley of Ootacamund. Ootacamund is about the central point of the hills. The first explorers started from a village named Dananayankottai on the east (right), and took the most obvious slope up to Kotagiri, which lies about sixteen miles east of Ootacamund. There they turned left-handed—west and south—and so returned, leaving unfound that which they had hoped but scarcely expected to

find. But discovery was not long delayed. In 1819 John Sullivan went up, and *probably* reached Ootacamund. In 1820 Mrs Sullivan, the first European woman to ascend the Nilgiris, went up, but seems to have got no farther than Kotagiri. A few years later all mystery was cleared up: Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of the Presidency, visited Ootacamund in 1826, and in 1827 seventeen houses for Europeans had been built.

The possibility of a sanatorium on the hills was now obvious and indubitable, but the actual troop sanatorium of today was not built at Ootacamund. It was built at Wellington, which is just by Coonoor and about 1500 feet lower down. There was a reason for this. The heaviest rains of South India come with the south-west winds which blow from June to September, and Ootacamund at the summit of the hills gets the full force of wind and rain. Heavenly though the climate of Ootacamund is from the beginning of October to the end of May, it is by no means so pleasant during the remaining four months for those who have not the comfort of well-built houses and the amusement of hunting. I remember that one day a rainfall of twenty-seven inches was recorded at Pykara, which is not far north of Ootacamund. Military exercises (drill, route marching, and such things) would be impossible, and there would be no other opportunity of relaxation or occupation for soldiers. Wel-

lington lies under the shoulder of Dodabetta, which acts as a shield. In the monsoon, when Ootacamund is cold and sloppy, Wellington is warm and dry. In later years I was summoned to Ooty (no one ever speaks of it as Ootacamund) on some official business. Driven distracted by the ceaseless rain I obtained permission to go down each evening to Coonoor. So at least I had a few morning and evening hours of dryness.

We have no record of the man who first 'noticed' the Todas. This is strange; for I think that the Todas must be the strangest, most inscrutable people that exist on earth. They are a small tribe, and their numbers do not vary greatly from decade to decade. At the census of 1881 there were 675 Todas; in 1901 there were 815; and in 1911, 748.

The Toda is a tall, olive-complexioned man. He has thick, curly black hair (most Indian peoples have straight hair) and black, curly beard. All Todas are bearded. As a rule he is singularly good-looking; and the most casual observer cannot fail to be struck by his extraordinary resemblance to the traditional pictures of Christ. Perhaps this likeness is responsible for a hypothesis which has been put forward that the Todas are a scattered fragment of the Jewish people. But there is no evidence to support this theory, or to support another theory that the Todas are the remnants of a Roman colony.

The Todas are not communicative, but their own account of their origin is at anyrate amusing. The god On and his sister Teikirzi went one day on a jaunt to the Kundahs: this is the name of the hills in the south-west corner of the block. They put a plank across the highest hill and played swing-swing. As either end of the plank touched the ground and sprang up it dragged with it a Toda buffalo. The god and goddess continued their sport for some time. When they wearied, they found that the god had collected 1600 buffaloes, the goddess 1800. But the honours were with the god; for clinging to the tail of his last buffalo was the first Toda man. The kindly god, recognising that man is not made to live alone, threw the Toda into a deep sleep, extracted one of his ribs, and fashioned for him a helpmeet. This is an exact reproduction of the story of the creation of Eve.

So the Todas and their buffaloes came to the Nilgiri hills, and there they are to this day. They have not changed a bit, and probably they never will change. Buffaloes are the sole interest and object of the Toda's life. Houses have sprung up, roads have been made, crops are cultivated, motors hoot, and trains rattle. The Toda is not interested in any of these things. He will only graze his buffaloes, milk them, make butter, take his milk and butter to market, sell them, and stalk homewards. And the Todas' dwellings are

as peculiar as themselves. The Todas live in groups, usually in the neighbourhood of a stream. A Toda's house resembles exactly a gigantic beehive standing on the ground: a rectangular piece is cut out to afford entrance, and the entrance is so low that a man must go on all-fours to pass through. What is within is rather a matter of speculation, for Todas do not invite strangers into their houses. There is likewise some mystery about the churning and butter-making. Apparently one Toda does the butter-making for his little community, and the 'profane' vessels in which butter and milk are brought to market are kept strictly separate from the 'sacred' vessels in which butter and milk are kept within the dairy.

The Toda does no harm to any man, but it is not easy to talk to him. In fact, with one exception, I found it so difficult as to be wellnigh impossible. Practically all Todas can speak Badaga, which is a dialect of Kanarese, and most of them can get along with Tamil. But they have a language of their own, and before the Toda language the outside world bows its head—'outgraves,' so to speak. The only sounds that I could ever distinguish were *Hoo*, *Hoo-oo*, *Hootch*. In fact I never could hear any difference between a Toda buffalo bellowing and his master talking, save that the voice of the former was the louder. My one exception was the one

travelled Toda: Phineas T. Barnum had persuaded him to come for a season to America as an exhibit in his museum. On his return this Toda wore spectacles, which were generally regarded as betokening a knowledge of the outside world. I met him one morning out walking; he fell in alongside me and talked to me in Tamil. But I could see that he was nerving himself for an effort. There had been frost during the night, and a hoar-frost was on the grass. He stopped and stared at this, then turned to me. "*Ishnow*" (evidently "snow"), he said proudly. He had brought back just this one word of English from his travels.

I have not heard that the Todas practise 'birth control,' but, before the Government interfered, they regulated the number of their tribe rather drastically. They are polyandrists, and they practised female infanticide. Thereby hangs a rather grim tale. There is in the Kundahs a precipitous peak named Mukkarti. This name is derived from two Tamil words: *mukku* (nose) and *arukka* (to cut). Hence 'the nose-cutting mountain.' The mythological explanation of the name is this. Ravanna, the demon prince-god of Ceylon, annoyed because the people of these parts paid greater reverence to his rival Rama, afflicted them with a plague of lice. Rama, a somewhat ungallant hero-god, captured Ravanna's sister, cut off her

nose, and planted the nose in the Kundahs as a warning to any trespasser into his domain. The Toda explanation is more severely practical. They were accustomed to pitch unwanted female babies over this precipice, and women were strictly forbidden to witness the performance. One Toda woman (Rachel mourning for her children) made her way to the mountain and lay hidden there. The Todas found her, and cut off her nose as a warning to the curious.

There is another precipice somewhat north of Ooty, of which the name might puzzle the visitor. It is *Hecuba*. What connection can there be between the Nilgiris and the Queen of Troy? *Hecuba* was a hound of the Ooty pack. In the course of a run she fell over this precipice and was killed. *Sed non omnis mortua.*

Open infanticide can be stopped, but it is whispered that the Todas have a private way of 'trying out' female recruits to the tribe. The luckless infant is placed at the entrance to the kraal, and the herd is driven in over her. If she survives, she is brought up; if she does not survive, there is no need or possibility of bringing her up. Toda buffaloes as a rule are fierce, but amazingly obedient to their masters. It is a quaint experience (I have had it) to shiver as an uncouth beast 'with most skewering purpose' lowers its horns at one, then to see a Toda child spring up, take the

beast by the horn, and lead it away, playfully cuffing its head.

The Toda reverences the sun, and has a way, queer to our eyes, of expressing his reverence. He puts his thumb to his nose and spreads out his fingers. In fact he 'cocks a snook' at the sun. Queer how people interpret actions in different ways.

Numerically the Badagas are an important Nilgiri tribe: there are about 40,000 of them. There is no mystery about their origin: the name of the tribe is a corruption of the Tamil word for 'north.' The Badagas have drifted into the Nilgiris from Mysore, which lies to the north of the mountains. They are queer people, with some good and some bad points. They keep their villages beautifully trim and neat. Their houses, nearly always roofed with red tiles, are bright and picturesque. The Badagas are cheerful, bustling, very industrious. Unfortunately they are extremely dishonest. Their dishonesty was expounded to me amusingly by a Greek, member of a race generally credited with ability to look after itself in business. The Greek was Mr Chakona, contractor, private banker, general merchant. He had an office on the Nilgiris, and some question arose about his income tax. Mr Chakona arrived at the collector's office bearing a ledger which was written in Greek; and on the strength of my University distinctions I was told to look into it. I might as well have

tried to read Etruscan; and the Greek which Mr Chakona read aloud to me seemed singularly unlike the Greek of Thucydides. The point was soon cleared up, and we chatted amicably. Mr Chakona was doing very well; but an adventure into financing Badaga potato-growers had proved disastrous. Mr Chakona sighed: "I took security, of course; but to get hold of that security seems about as easy as to hold an eel by its tail." I believe that some twenty-five years later Badaga 'finance' was the root cause of a tragedy which shook Ooty society to its foundations.

But a truce to ethnology: I never had any scientific knowledge of it. What I know I learned by just talking to people. And for my year at Ooty I was perpetually talking. I had really no work to do, and I had a percipient chief, the late Charles Mullaly. He remarked that I must concentrate on three objects: first, getting well; second, passing the examinations (the Government of Madras was then daft on examinations) prescribed for official *chokras*; third, getting to understand the language of the people. Mullaly spoke Tamil perfectly. The first two aims I accomplished, and I think that I made some progress towards the third. I established myself in a little house near Kandal (a quarter of Ooty), and in the first days (or months) of convalescence I invited anyone who felt inclined to come in and talk to me. Later,

Mullaly put me in general charge of a village about four miles from Ooty. I used to walk there and back, and it was my custom to hire anyone who stood idle in the marketplace to walk with me. Three conditions of employment I made. My companion must talk, he must *not* talk English, and I informed him candidly that I would brain him if he replied to my remarks in Tamil with the stereotyped Tamil answer, "I don't understand English." This is a maddening trait of the Tamil. He is usually an apt linguist, and admittedly Tamil is a difficult language. But he need not be so openly contemptuous of the foreigner who at anyrate is trying to learn Tamil.

There was plenty of sport : hunting and cricket. The Ooty hounds were started in 1845 by engineer soldiers engaged on public buildings, but were given up, as the country was pronounced unridable. It was a queer hunting country, very like the Berkshire and Wiltshire downs, raised 8000 feet up in the air. On the crests of these English downs race-horses are trained, but it probably does not occur to trainers to send their horses galloping straight down the slopes. And the slopes of the Ooty downs are steeper. Again, streams cross the Ooty downs; they are terribly dangerous. For they can be crossed only at certain charted points. To ride casually into one of these streams is to ride into a bottom-

less quicksand. One might also meet obstreperous Toda buffaloes. This last danger was remote; but I actually saw a rider (Captain Lygon) nearly killed in this way. He met a buffalo; the buffalo charged like a flash, and horned him badly.

But these dangers and obstacles proved surmountable. The enthusiasm of Mr J. W. Brecks, Commissioner of the Nilgiris in 1869, and of Colonel Robert Jago, Master from 1874 to 1887, triumphed over everything. It was found that a horse can gallop down any slope, however steep, if only he is headed *straight* down it. To 'slant' is fatal. The stream crossings were charted, and the hunt and the Toda buffaloes accommodated themselves to one another.

I recall a few personalities of the hunting field of my day. Sir Gabriel Stokes, Chief Secretary to Government, was 'field-master.' He was a big, heavy man, a useful horseman but nothing more. But he had a couple of fine weight-carrying hunters; and he had an almost uncanny hunting aptitude, an instinctive knowledge of the line that a jackal (we hunted jackals) would take. He was always in the first flight.

A different type was Mr Colin Mackenzie, a planter, and descendant of a family connected with the Nilgiris since their first opening up. He was rather tall, and very slim. He had a perfect seat on a horse, and perfect hands. He had never shaved, and he had

a beautiful silky beard turning grey, and smooth, silvery hair. He was proud of his patriarchal appearance until an Indian paper rather 'overdid it.' It printed a capital photo of Mr Mackenzie riding over jumps at the Ooty Horse Show, and added the legend, "The veteran sportsman is now in his seventy-fifth year." There seems to have been a peculiarity or potentiality latent in Mr Mackenzie. The friend who introduced me to him warned me privately to be on the look-out for, and not to notice, his volcanic temper. But I have never met an elderly man more uniformly courteous and kindly to a young man. Perhaps I have the knack of getting on with irascible old gentlemen, for a friend of my student days was the famous Lord Justice Ronan. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest lawyers that Ireland ever produced; but I fear that in a general way he was about as popular as a weasel with the toothache. Yet he and I got on famously. We took long walks together, Ronan eternally smoking a long pipe and pouring forth learning and wit. I mentioned casually to a barrister one day that on the previous evening I had dined with the Lord Justice. The barrister seemed to think it equivalent to saying that I had dropped in at the Zoo and picked a bone with the tiger.

Mr Mackenzie was killed (actually he lingered for a few days) by a hunting accident on

the downs. I can recall only one other hunting fatality. This was the son of Sir Arthur Lawley, then Governor of the Presidency.

A visitor who deserves a word is Donald Mackinnon, the great Australian horse importer. I mentioned him once in 'Maga,' and, though I had not seen him for thirty years, it brought me a cheery letter from Australia. Its opening is worth quoting: "When a man has sold about 11,000 horses, he usually has made a few enemies. I am glad that you are not numbered among mine." Mackinnon and I used to hold confabs at the Ooty Club. I am sure that other members wondered what we were talking about. What could the great horseman and horse-master have in common with a youth who could just stay right side up on a quiet horse, and whose knowledge of horses went no further than that the head is at one end and the tail at the other. As a matter of fact we were reciting poetry to one another. Mackinnon was an illustration of Whyte-Melville's theory that the great horseman has usually a streak of poetry and romance in his composition. Mackinnon was soaked in poetry; he delighted in it.

Cricket in Ooty was good in 1900, and much better when I visited the Nilgiris eleven years later. Now, I am told, it has 'slumped.' We had a magnificent ground—any county would be proud to own it—in the

Hobart Park, and there were some notable personalities among the players. One was C. T. Studd, acclaimed in his youth as a possible rival of the great 'W. G.' He had played for Cambridge, Middlesex, the Gentlemen, England. When quite a young man he left England and cricket to preach the Gospel in foreign lands, and he preached (and practised what he preached) to his life's end. He was a charming fellow. He was a stylist as a batsman, with a wonderful power of timing and placing. Occasionally he called me for a run before he actually struck the ball. He had summed it up; he knew exactly where it was going.

Another cricketer was R. M. Poore, in his day perhaps the greatest batsman in England. Poore stood like a steel tower, and to the bowler (I essayed a little left-handed slow bowling) his bat looked like a barn door. He was a master of almost every athletic exercise: polo, sword-play, real tennis, lawn tennis, rackets. And yet I do not think that he was a 'natural' games player. He had a curiously methodical mind. He reduced all games to 'first principles,' then studied these principles until he had mastered them. He loved coaching. "I'm an awful old schoolmaster," he once said to me. Some did not like his incessant advising. It seemed to me that when a master offers instruction, the tyro had best take it and be thankful.

A cricketing personality that lingers in my mind is W. Dobbie. He was a subaltern on leave (I think) from some British regiment stationed in India. His name will not mean anything to students of 'big' cricket. And yet I think that, had his lines been cast in England and amid county cricket, Dobbie might one day or other have played for England. He was a giant: he stood six feet three or four, and in hard training—he was always as hard as a cricket-ball—he must have scaled fifteen stone or more. As a bowler he reminded me somewhat of Tom Richardson, the great Surrey player. He had the same tremendous pace, and, as with Richardson, the pace came, not from a convulsive effort in the last second, but from a long, smooth, gradually quickening run to the wicket, with his arm in the act of delivery swinging easily full stretch above his head. Like Richardson, he could bowl for a long spell without rest—the modern fast bowler needs a rest after half a dozen overs—and, like Richardson, he never lost his length. A tussle between Poore batting and Dobbie bowling was worth seeing. Dobbie was a first-rate fieldsman, with hands that would hold anything. He was a capital bat at No. 7 or 8. He had not sufficient defence to open an innings, but he was by no means a cross-batted slogger. Rather he was a fine, free-scoring bat, and when he put his tremendous strength

into a drive, the ball *did* travel. And yet the greatest exhibition of clean hitting I have ever seen in India or elsewhere was by a small man, Captain Meyrick, a Free Forester. Against by no means bad bowling he hit up sixty-six in just twenty minutes, and completely turned round the fortunes of a match. I, alas ! was on the fielding side.

Some of the Indian players were remarkably good. K. Sesachariar visited England with an Indian team, and was acclaimed as a wicket-keeper fit for any side on earth. R. Narayana Rao was a first-class all-rounder. He embraced a queer career ; he became a Hindu religious recluse. And of a left-handed bowler, Amirtham, I have a vivid recollection : the first ball that I received from him lingers in my memory. It promised to be a full pitch to leg. I had shaped for the stroke, when suddenly I realised that the ball had come outside the off-stump. An in-swinging or out-swinging is bad enough ; but the bowler who can make the ball swerve both ways in the air is a nightmare. American baseball pitchers, I believe, can perform the same trick, and for the same reason. Amirtham's delivery would never have passed a first-class English umpire : he was a thrower.

The Nilgiris had entered on a period of commercial depression at the time of my stay. In the early part of the nineteenth century coffee had been a staple product ; now before the relent-

less pressure of Brazil Nilgiri coffee was slumping badly. I fancy that small individual proprietors were badly fitted to stand up against organised competition. The industry was vertically organised (so far as it was organised at all), not horizontally. The planter paid other agencies for curing, transporting, selling his coffee, till there was little left for himself. One huge estate, the Ochterlony Valley — Ochterlony was one of the Nilgiri pioneers — was more systematically organised, and I believe that it still prospers as the Ochterlony Trust.

There had been money in cinchona ; but cinchona too was slumping. It is from the bark of the cinchona tree that quinine is made ; and I wonder how many people know the origin of the tree's name. Quinine was discovered by Jesuits in Peru early in the seventeenth century, and the first influential patron and 'populariser' of the drug in the outside world was the Countess de Cinchon, wife of a Governor of Peru. The bark was first known as 'Peruvian bark,' then as 'Jesuit's bark' ; and because of this last name there was for long a prejudice against its use in early England. The Government started a cinchona plantation, private planters followed suit, and for a time all went merry as a marriage bell. Quinine sold at 10s. 3d. per pound ; but quickly enough the price dropped to 2s. Because of greater climatic

advantages or because of more scientific methods of cultivation, Java conquered the quinine market. Out of an estimated annual consumption of about 1,000,000 lbs., some 800,000 lbs. come from Java.

Cinchona recalls to me a remarkable Nilgiri personality. This was George Romilly. He was at first a coffee planter, next he was for a time superintendent of the Government cinchona plantations. Then when he must have been well over fifty years of age, he was appointed—how or why I never knew—editor of the ‘*Madras Times*,’ a paper which had fallen on rather evil days. He had no journalistic training of any sort, but he proved to be one of the ablest editors and leader-writers that India has known. He made a wonderful success of the paper. He was a forceful, downright character, a man who always spoke what he believed to be the truth, and damned the consequences. So he enjoyed the respect alike of Indians and Europeans, of friends and enemies. Though indeed he had no real enemies.

The Nilgiris experienced the very doubtful blessing of a ‘gold rush.’ It was known so early as 1800 that there had been mines somewhere about, and in 1831 old mine-shafts were discovered in the Wynaad Valley, where the Nilgiris slope down westwards to the Malabar district. These, it was said, had been worked by slaves of the Nilambur Tirumalpad, a

Malayali nobleman. It was rumoured that each slave was bound to produce a barleycorn weight of gold at the end of the day under penalty of being decapitated, boiled alive, or finding some other sticky ending. By 1881 a gold rush was in full swing. A Government surveyor had reported cautiously that there *might* be something in it; but he added pessimistically—and, as it proved, truly—that the only money made would be made by financiers, company promoters, ‘experts.’ Of these ‘experts’ one was subsequently found to be a retired baker, another a circus clown temporarily out of a job. Some £4,000,000 went into the Wynaad mines, and little or nothing of the sum came back legitimately. Of course the financiers and directors did well enough. Some planters did well by selling their gardens to mining companies. Once a mine did develop a rich ‘pocket,’ and shares shot up to fifteen times the price of a few days earlier. Alas! they speedily shot or tumbled down again. Those who “caught fortune as she flies” and sold their shares were lucky.

I once asked an experienced mining engineer why gold should be the universal standard of value. “Because,” he replied, “on a long and wide view about as much money has gone into gold-mines as ever came out of them.” He was connected with the very successful Mysore gold-mines. I once

went down 3200 feet in a Mysore mine, and fancied that I was reaching the nether regions. It was swelteringly hot. At the store-house the superintendent genially invited me to help myself to a bar or two. There was a catch in this: the bars were too heavy for a man to lift.

I recall one funny incident of my Nilgiri stay and official apprenticeship. I am quick at languages, and it was my whim to dispense with an interpreter in Tamil. I went one day to hold Court in a little outlying town towards the foot of the western slopes, and there came before me a man who certainly did not look like any other Nilgiri inhabitant that I had seen. But one sees all sorts and sizes of people about the Nilgiris, and I invited the party to state his case. But his Tamil (as I thought) baffled me utterly. I summoned my head clerk, who was a Eurasian; he fared no better. So we sent for a Hindu official, who arrived smiling gently at the discomfiture of the foreigner (myself) and the quasi-foreigner (Eurasian clerk). But pride went before a fall: the proud Hindu 'handed in his gun' before a torrent of strange-sounding vocables. "Is there anyone who knows who this man is, or what he wants," I asked bewilderedly. Then up and spake a man from one of the Malabar ports: "He's a Chinese sailor, and I suppose he's talking Chinese. What is he doing here or what does he

want? God knows; I don't." Alas! poor Chinaman; I have often wondered what he *did* want. In later years, when I was President of the Madras Municipal Corporation, I had a call from an officer of a Japanese cruiser. He was awfully polite to me, and I trust that I was polite to him. But what he desired of me is still for me wrapt in mystery. I assured him (in English) that everything I had was at his disposal. He bowed himself out, apparently satisfied and uttering speech which seemed to be complimentary.

I was in Ooty again in 1911. I had carried out the decennial census of the Madras Presidency, and I was allowed to write my report in Ooty. The report was my first published piece, and, in a way, my most successful piece. That blue-book became, more or less, a best seller. I am reminded of a remark by the late Humbert Wolfe. He said that he produced a work of which a first edition of nearly 20,000,000 copies was sold. It seems that it was Wolfe who put together and brought out (he was a Civil Servant) the papers which explain the outbreak of the present war. Needless to say, my modest effort did not reach these astonishing figures; but it did well enough.

I enjoyed this second stay in Ooty. Hunting, for an economic reason, had become impossible for me. There was one (myself) in my household in 1900; in 1911 there were

five. But Nilgiri cricket was then at its best, and I played a lot of it.

I visited Ooty in (I think) the last year of the Great War. This time I was the guest of Lord Pentland at Government House. From its terrace looking left-handed I noticed a curious phenomenon. The slope of Dodabetta overhanging the Coonoor road was a representation on a gigantic scale of the head of the late Marquess of Salisbury, Prime Minister of England. The likeness was astonishing and uncanny.

Ooty was changing then, and the change grew more perceptible in the last few years of my stay in India. The class, half affectionately, half ironically known as 'the white Todas' had practically died out by 1925. These were Europeans, for the most part old army officers, who had settled for good in Ooty, made their homes there. Probably most of them dated their first arrival in India from between 1850 and 1860. The voyage in those days took about seven months, and so leave to England was practically an impossibility. A man might return to England on the completion of thirty to forty years' service; but by that time he usually had lost all touch with England, and he preferred to remain where he found himself. Ooty in 1900 was full of retired Generals. It reminded me of the Algerian town described by Guy de

Maupassant as inhabited solely by Generals. Now, when the passage is a mere matter of days, the conditions which produced the white Todas no longer exist.

Another change which started during the Great War, and continued with growing intensity, was not (I think) for the better. During the war journeying from the East to England was well-nigh impossible; and after the war holiday life in England, with its incessant strikes and labour commotions, was not particularly attractive. So pleasure-seekers from all parts of the world began to pour into Ooty. They brought money with them, and Ooty became a very expensive dwelling place. Things were speeded up, 'improved.' In the old days, with one horse or two horses of any sort one could hunt and have good fun. Now a faster strain of hound was imported, and visitors came to hunt bringing with them strings of a dozen first-class hunters. The small man was crowded out: it was the difference between Mr Jogglebury Crowdy's pack and the Pythley. There had been racing of a sort in the old days. Men raced the horses on which they hunted or which they drove in dog-carts, and rode the horses themselves. Now racing became an affair of real racehorses imported from Australia and England, of professional trainers and professional jockeys. Everyone no longer knew everybody else:

the casual, good-humoured, holiday spirit was no more.

From one charge made implicitly and explicitly against Indian hill stations by Kipling I must defend Ooty. For Kipling hill stations were haunts of naughtiness: everyone, especially every woman, spent his or her time doing things which he or she ought not to do. "Not for *my* wife, thank you," says Captain Gadsby sharply when it is suggested to him that he should send Mrs Gadsby to the hills. It may have been so in Simla: it certainly was not so in Ooty. Ooty was respectable.

I sometimes wonder whether Kipling knew so much of India and of things in general as he was credited with knowing. He was observant, he had a marvellous knack of picking up the 'patter' of any trade or any social class, he had the genius that carried his readers along unthinking. But I read an analysis by an expert of one of his poems which describes a sea-fight. Thus analysed the brilliant description sounded uncommonly like blatant nonsense. Of the "Soldiers Three" an old soldier asked, "What were the sergeants doing?" Sergeants, especially in the old army, were sergeants, and with them three privates would scarcely have stepped so high, wide, and frequent as Privates

Ortheris, Mulvaney, and Leary. As regards the Englishman and the Indian, Lord Pentland once remarked to me that Kipling, no doubt unintentionally and unwittingly, had done a great deal of harm. For him the Englishman was eternally "bearing the white man's burden," eternally watching over and uplifting the Indian. The Indian gets sick of this. If a lot of the Indian's ways seem silly to the Englishman, a lot of the Englishman's ways seem super-silly to the Indian. And not every English official in India is a blend of Napoleon and Sir Galahad.

Well, those were jolly days. I look back on them with pleasure, but I feel no great desire to live them again. That is a beneficent provision of Nature or of God. Age brings its own pleasures. I read this strikingly stated by Sir Seymour Hicks in his autobiography. He had enjoyed his glittering years of triumph as the favourite *jeune premier* of the London musical comedy stage; but now, nearing seventy, he finds himself quite as happy, perhaps happier. Browning was not wrong when he wrote—

"the best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first
was made."

And so I end my story in contentment.

THE TRAP.

BY ILLINGWORTH H. KERR.

JIM TWO FEATHERS was a neighbour of mine. We lived barely a hundred miles apart; he on Cumberland Lake at the river-mouth of the Mossy, I up beyond Ballantyne Lake. Jim is a Swampy Cree. He stands six foot two in his moccasins, which are not beaded—or were not: Jim was a bachelor when I knew him. He lived alone, an exceptional Indian. And I would rate him as full-blooded as most, though on his mother's side he had 'a wee drop of Scotch,' as he used to say, grinning.

But Jim Two Feathers was not grinning much one autumn day when I called in on my way north for the winter. Despite his easy-going nature, I could tell from the gleam in Jim's sloe-black eyes how deeply the grudge had bitten as he told about a stranger, one Pierre Letruc, poaching on his preserves.

Now this one thing more than all else leads to enmity and hatred in the Northland—trespassing by newcomers on the territory of those already established. For, vast though the wilderness is, all ground is not only covered, but badly trapped out. And since fur prices began dropping in 1928, existence is only possible owing to free meat, free fuel, and lack of taxes. The Depression

also struck northward; and, worse, washed up a wave of its southern victims.

So Jim Two Feathers' naturally dark visage was like a thundercloud as he said, "Empty belly no good; and belly empty pretty soon if fur all gone. I'm careful not to trap too much, but Letruc's damn wolverine."

"He's a trap thief?" I asked. (That was the worst of Southerners.)

"No," Jim admitted. "He steal, I shootum. But he take from my trap just the same by catchum my fox and my marten."

There you had it: Jim regarded all animals coming within certain bounds as being rightfully his—his to catch and trade for grub-stake and ammunition, or his to leave free for breeding purposes, according to necessity. But jealous competition meant the end of mercy, the end of fur. And Jim knew so well and loved these woods where his father, old Neekapayan, had trapped before him! While now, if forced to leave he would have to turn outlaw on someone else's territory! It was a shame.

"Tell you what we should do," I suggested. "We should go after the Saskatchewan Government to allow us to register our trap-lines for legal

protection, as they do in British Columbia."

Jim grunted: his opinion of the Government. "Too late," he said.

Yes, another winter was almost here; we were a long hard way from a post-office, and the Government was not likely to leap in response to an individual request. (I knew.)

"Well, what *can* we do?"

"I got plan," Jim stated impassively.

"Let's hear it."

Jim shook his head. But the bronze mask of his face broke into a slow smile; the gleam in his eyes was now one of dark mischief. His eyes lifted to his cabin, outside which we sat on a log, and following his gaze my own was drawn to two great bear traps that hung beneath the eaves. Number 6 Newhouse, they were, the largest made, having off-set teeth and double springs so powerful that they had to be set with clamps. How Jim had come by this expensive hardware, or why, I do not know; for bear hides are practically valueless, and Bruin is not an illusive target. Neither do I know—for a rifle and a shotgun were also suspended under the eaves—why those bear traps struck me as being part of Jim's plan for ridding himself of his competitor. I still recall the cold thrill that ran down my spine.

Still, "You're going to mistake him for a moose and shoot him?" I asked first.

"Too much Mounted Police," Jim said, and grinned.

"Catch him in a trap then?" I hazarded.

He darted one quick glance at me.

"Bad medicine," I advised.

"Strong medicine," Jim said, and grinned more broadly. "You'd do it."

"Perhaps I'd want to," I admitted, trying to put myself in Jim's moccasins. Then, "Good God, no! Those traps would mangle a man's foot. He'd go crazy in a few hours! Those bloody teeth!"

"Fixum," Jim said briefly, and I thought he was referring to his intended victim. Not kill him, of course; but his plan seemed obvious. Either to cripple Letruc for a season or to get him in a spot where threats would sound convincing. He could make Letruc promise to leave the district for ever when freed from the trap. Otherwise—well, he could stay there. Or else he could continue to work over Jim's ground haunted by the fear of this 'accident' repeating itself, perhaps in sub-zero weather. As for police interference, there could only be one man's word against another's.

I could see only one snag in this plan: Jim had a merciful heart. He had once played good Samaritan to me when I came off a bad best with a she-bear in a berry patch near Jim's home. The old she, having a cub in tow, had surprised me by charging through dense saskatoons, and

I shot her at less than ten feet; hardly enough, for she hugged me and mauled me before she passed out. But the strange thing was not that Jim lugged me home and patched me up as he did, but that he also rescued the orphaned bear cub. Indians are not generally kind to animals, as witness their treatment of sleigh-dogs. Jim Two Feathers was different.

"No; I don't believe you would pull a trick like that, even on this Pierre Letruc," I told him. "I know you too well. But, anyway, remember what you said—too much Mounted Police!"

"You tell?" Jim asked.

My only answer was the advice, "You forget this idea, Jim." And I repeated it before launching forth again next day in *Old Eliza*, my freight canoe propelled by a kicker.

That winter I was often uncomfortably reminded of Jim; for I myself was plagued by an outlaw trap-line blazed across half of my territory. When I met the poacher face to face I found him a decent sort, but I could not bring myself to be friendly—not even there, alone at the world's end. And if I felt as I did, what must be the stirrings in Jim Two Feathers' savage blood?

In view of recent 'civilised' history, however, let me retract that last statement. Enough to say that Jim was not seeking to deprive another of his heritage, and few can

condemn his method of defending his own.

By 'fixum' Jim had referred, at least partly, to his bear traps. He filed the teeth off them—that much a humanitarian. Then he hoisted them, forty pounds each with their logging chains, and added another twenty that included clamps, long iron pins and his old 44.40 Winchester, preparatory to setting out through the spruce for a point on Crooked Creek, three miles away. As he swung along he scarcely noticed that hundredweight on his back; he had a greater load on his mind.

It was just the beginning of November, time for pelts to be priming up, and Pierre Letruc would be out after the few mink that still lived on the creek. Their pelts would not be at their best till near Christmas, but here again was an evil of competition; if Jim's present scheme failed he would have to go after those mink right away in self-defence.

As for his present destination, he knew that Letruc, an active little Quebec Frenchman, would be following the natural game trails along the creek, and Jim had in mind a spot where numerous trails converged, perfect for placing his traps.

Set a thief to catch a thief; a trapper to catch a trapper! Is it not strange that one who could outwit the most cunning of animals should be easiest to catch? Human sus-

picion is not on the alert to such dangers. Nor have we the keen noses of fox and wolf that may instantly detect a trap, no matter how perfectly concealed. And here, to help Jim further, what little snow there had been had melted; he need leave no tell-tale tracks.

Still, Jim knew a great number of things could go wrong. Letruc might free himself if he had a trap-wrench in his pocket; so Jim had 'riveted' the bolt ends below the traps' jaws. Letruc might also free himself if he carried an axe and cut poles, snubbing them under tree roots to lever down those huge springs; so Jim chose a place where only large trees grew, clean of limbs at the base. Letruc must not escape by his own efforts. That would serve no good, and he would thenceforth become as wary as the wolverine to which Jim had compared him.

There was also the possibility of deer, moose, bear or rabbit getting caught, which would bring the trap to Letruc's notice. So Jim contaminated each one with a very strong human scent; then added a dose of rabbit's blood. This combination should warn all but the stupid. However, one must not underestimate this chance of catching the wrong game; two placements were chosen about twenty yards apart; if a running animal did blunder into one, Letruc, his curiosity roused, might blunder into the other.

Now for real action. Into

the frozen earth Jim drove those long iron pins, thus securing the trap-chains instead of wiring them to log drags or trees that might be cut by an axe. Next, in the trail he chopped two shallow holes, these being of an exact size and shape. The spare earth he carried off and dumped in the woods. Then with the clamps he screwed down the traps' double springs, setting them. The triggers he braced with stout twigs, so that no small animal could trip them. And now, the traps in their beds, he began carefully to cover with dead autumn leaves.

The final result showed not a trace of human handiwork. Jim nodded his satisfaction. From time to time he had glanced up and down creek. Never a movement had his keen eyes detected, though his labours had taken over an hour. Now it was three o'clock; another hour would see it dark in the woods. He set out for home.

The hour passed. Jim was home, or well on his way; Pierre Letruc was not. Pierre had been far up the creek that day, and, busy setting mink traps, he had not noticed how quickly the time had passed. Now he half-seriously wondered if he should sleep out beside a fire. For it was over seven miles to his camp, bush miles, and it was not desirable to have an eye damaged by prodding twigs.

Pierre hummed a little lumber

camp ditty. It kept him company, though he feared nothing except *le bon Dieu* Himself. But, *Sacré*, was it not baffling how Nightfall in its little moc-casined feet stole down to shroud the eyes? It caught one unawares. Well, there was a brace of spruce hens in the pack and one could dine shortly, waiting for that thin sliver of a moon to lift above the underbush. Also there was tea and a tiny kettle. It would be some comfort at least. . . .

In the faint light Letruc was still sensing his way along. His practised feet almost saw the stick across the trail, and naturally he stepped over it—smack into the precisely laid jaws of Jim's bear trap.

The jaws flashed like lightning out of their leafy bed; clamped with terrific force on Letruc's ankle. Momentum and the weight of his pack carried him forward. But the long springs, direct in line with his approach, levered against his fall and prevented the trap from having free movement on his foot. That and the crash of jaws with a seven-hundred-pound pressure beneath them snapped Letruc's ankle like a match.

With the first passing of that excruciating, stomach-twisting pain, Pierre realised what had happened. He, a trapper, had been caught in a trap—a very big trap, a bear trap turned man trap! But the many implications of his plight had not yet occurred to him.

He thought his ankle no more than sprained. His single reaction was, "An accident, and bad enough. But I know traps, me; I will get out."

Then, attempting to rise, he realised he had suffered a fracture. "*Sacré*, what a mess!" he swore. Though by some sort of improvised crutch he might get home, what a time he would have! Nothing the lone bushman fears more. And since the best trapping precedes the new year, before snow gets too deep, he would have little to show the trader next spring. Little or less than nothing. He might wind up crippled for life! It was a dreary outlook in any case.

But now to get out of this trap. One must examine it. One must light a match. But one must move, oh! so carefully.

"*Mon Dieu*, the pain! Damn that Indian for one fool!" But Letruc was turned now, seated, the trap facing him. He fumbled for matches; lit one carefully; he must preserve them, these few.

A small fire of twigs. Ah, that was better! But the size of the trap was staggering. Would a small pair of pliers—used for wiring trap-chains—ever undo those rusty bolts? Aha, they were freshly riveted! What devil possessed that Indian?

The first faint suspicion now crossed Letruc's mind. Jim Two Feathers had always been surly, what few times they had met last season, though

he, Pierre, had sought to be friendly. True, they were competitors; but was the wilderness not free? Was it not the last hope of one who, since the Depression had closed all the lumber camps, had striven to be self-supporting? Government relief camps—God forbid that a Letruc should ever become an object of charity! And now . . .!

"If dat Indian intend for to do dis t'ing I will *keel 'im!*" Jim's unfortunate victim cried aloud, as if for the other to hear. "*Before God, I will keel 'im!*"

Then Letruc discovered the great trap had been shorn of its teeth, and, grateful as he was for the circumstance, it appeared to be damaging evidence. Evidence but not proof. Not for the Mounted Police. Still, enough for the tortured Letruc. And there was further proof in the fact that the trap-chain was secured by a long iron pin, not attached to a log drag—as is always the case with large animals which might chew or jerk themselves free. No teeth in the trap, and rooted to the spot . . . "Sacré, it is enough! I will *keel 'im!*"

The Frenchman ground his teeth in rage; yet only when it became apparent that there was no immediate hope of freedom did he lose control. Then he wept in his helpless fury. He mouthed imprecations that normally had made him shudder in the company of lumberjacks. He spat and

snarled like a wild creature in like predicament. The while he attacked the earth with a small hatchet, hacking at clay frozen hard as flint in an effort to dislodge the iron pin.

The hatchet seemed as feeble a tool as if with it he attacked the walls of Sing-Sing. To go deeper, the hole must be constantly enlarged—by a small chip at each stroke. And then his light failed. All the surrounding twigs had exhausted themselves in ashes. There was only the sparking of steel on steel as the hatchet glanced on to that invincible pin, blunting itself.

But in the discouraging darkness reason finally returned. This enervating madness could avail nothing. As if he could painfully drag that trap far in the darkness! Even with the leverage of sticks he could not bring enough weight to bear on those powerful springs, a more deliberate reasoning told him.

This returning sanity was cool and detached—if such can be so when every pulse rings with throbbing pain. Still I have Pierre Letruc's own word for it. He was suddenly outside and above himself. He was looking down on a human wretch. He was looking at the thing that a moment ago had been futilely snarling and spitting and clawing, like a trapped mink, like a marten, like a fox, like a fisher, like any of those helpless victims for which he had so often

prayed *le bon Dieu* would reward his efforts.

He, Pierre Letruc, who by virtue of man's unbalanced schemes had felt virtue in supporting himself by trapping, was learning in full truth the inhumanity of his own ways. And it was not pleasant. His remorse was born only through his own physical agony. All along he had known the cost of his freedom—and closed his eyes. On others he had thrown the blame. Those who found him no other work. Those who mismanaged things. Those who had money. Those who for vain women bought the needless spoils of the trapper. Needless? Yes. Pierre himself, living in the frozen wastes, had never needed fur to keep him warm. How many trappers themselves wear fur? Pierre had never known of one.

Afar off the wail of a timber wolf rose and tapered eerily into the thin cold air. Pierre on the ground was already shivering; now it was the Pierre above—his conscience—his soul—that shivered. As though that far cry had echoed the silent despairing wails of innumerable suffering victims of vanity. And Pierre, with no priest between him and his God, except the indifferent moon, cried out from his soul's midnight. He knew, as he had always known, that the sins of others spell no justification for the stifling of conscience. And now, while Pierre on the ground cried for mercy, the Pierre above, grown large

through contrition, pledged that this other, this wretch, should never again touch a steel trap unless to destroy it.

Yet it seemed that Pierre on the ground would never again touch a steel trap but this one that had him fast in its clutches. The night was hard with frost; frost that seeped into the bones with a deadly chill. And if such were true of his body and limbs, capable of convulsive exercise, what of his foot, robbed of circulation? Pierre had seen too many trapped feet not to know. Removing his threadbare mackinaw, he muffled the maimed member as best he could; then he commenced his long battle with the impartial night.

Of that one needs no description. No, nor assurances that he had not revoked his second pledge—though the first one he had for the time forgotten.

It was barely noon when Jim Two Feathers set out up the trail. He had intended to wait till late afternoon at least; for, if his efforts had met with success, he wanted his victim in malleable shape, as it were. Jim reckoned it would take some time in the trap to reduce Letruc to a submissive state. But all morning Jim had fidgeted (something hard to believe of him) about camp uneasily. His conscience, too, had been at work. It would not let him rest.

However, he had committed himself to this cause, and now

he rehearsed what he would say to his competitor—provided he was there for the appointment, of course. If he was, and Letruc refused to submit, then Jim would walk away and pretend he was going to leave him to his fate. Jim had thus treated a sled-dog once caught in a wolf trap near a moose cache. The dog had been too vicious to touch—but he had come to terms. And was Letruc not a lower form of the dog species?

Jim was prepared for a round cursing, like the barking of a dog. He was prepared to meet threats and be faced with a gun. He was not prepared for the pathetic sight that met his eyes. That still figure! That muffled foot! That hole in the ground! Some animals dig, when caught; Mother Earth their last hope.

“Caught all night!” It is quite possible that Jim’s swarthy features paled to white. He ran forward and knelt. He found Letruc’s heart was still beating. He turned and ran back for the clamps he had hidden nearby. Then he loosed the trap, an act that brought a moan but not a single flutter to the eyes. Just as well, this form of anæsthesia. Jim was cutting away the high-laced boot; that would hurt, too.

He briefly debated the value of any form of resuscitation here in the woods. Then he shook his head and prepared to take on his shoulders a responsible burden. He un-

wrapped a tump-line, always carried about his waist like a girdle, and adjusted a loop around Letruc’s middle; then across his own forehead. His arms were thus free to ease the limbs that jutted from this odd human pack.

Letruc weighed one hundred and sixty pounds, small though he was, but had he been double that burden Jim would have made those three bush miles to his home without a pause just the same. He had packed for the Hudson Bay Company, and I have seen him trundle around with five hundred of flour to show off. So I cannot dramatise those three miles or find him heroic.

At the time he was a little scared—and very, very angry. Angry at the unconscious form on his back for having caused all this trouble, past and present. Jim felt badly cheated. Now he would have to nurse the beggar when he had work to do. He rather hoped he would arrive home with a corpse.

He did not, quite. He had Letruc sitting up taking nourishment the next morning. The ankle, after a ticklish bit of bone-setting, was taking its chances on a primitive effort.

In setting the bone Jim had been sympathetic (meaning, careful); but in making venison-and-rice broth and feeding a patient who needs must usurp his bunk and his few blankets Jim was *not* sympathetic. His brow, as I picture him, was a dark thundercloud. And his lips were sealed. In

police parlance, 'he wasn't talking.'

Pierre Letruc did not have much to say either. He had no gratitude to express, since he blamed Jim for his state. Recriminations he withheld, his eyes silently answering Jim's silent charges. He made the fewest possible requests regarding his own comfort. That was pride; and it spoke when he suggested that Jim should go to his cabin for blankets and food. He was glad Jim acceded. There was no reason why he should not, of course, but they both had chips on their shoulders.

Jim's chip remained firmly in place. Pierre's was first to shake loose. It took a long time. Weeks. Jim remained sullen because Letruc was a burden. It is not easy for any man to play nurse; the task is less happy for an Indian, even when serving a friend, and I am glad I was not in Pierre's shoes—or bed-socks. For by nature he was not one to enjoy sulking or moping.

Pierre began to realise that Jim lived carefully, not hand-to-mouth like most Indians (that 'drop of Scotch,' who knows?), and the pitiful simplicity of his possessions told a story the other could not fail to understand. The cabin was so old that one knew Jim had long been established here as a trapper. So this territory was his by right of priority. And looking at things thus

from Jim's angle, Pierre began to lose a great deal of sympathy for himself.

This point had been arrived at during spells of solitude, while Jim was out on his trap-line. He was now able to leave his patient supplied with water, food, and fuel—sawn wood that could be reached from bed and put into the sheet-metal camp-stove.

"Listen, Jeem, I am ver' sorry, me, for mak' all dis trobble," Pierre undertook to tell Jim one night. He tried to explain how he felt. He tried to explain about the Depression; the hell of having no place to go.

Jim did not need to be told about the Depression. He had always been sorry Letruc had nowhere else to go—though he could name a much warmer place. . . . For the rest, this weakening on the other's part, he preferred they remain enemies.

"An' I veesh to tell you w're I leave traps set for mink," Pierre pursued. "You velcome to de fur, if any caught, but I veesh you to t'row away de damn trap."

Throw away good traps! Jim could not figure it out, other than that the Frenchman had lost his mind. And unmistakably he had an eccentric light in his eye.

"You promeese?" Pierre demanded.

No one, much less an Indian, likes to be alone with a madman. To an Indian a madman is one possessed of evil spirits,

and Jim was no more a Christian than most of us. So, feeling decidedly uncomfortable, he promised.

"Trapping it is so cruel," Pierre explained.

Jim nodded absently. To him this explained only how Pierre had come to go mad. That long night of torture! And he, Jim Two Feathers, responsible! He felt very sorry—chiefly for himself. Consciences are funny things.

"But you, my frien', I do not see how you mak' de living wit'out de trap." Pierre's quick dark eyes were troubled.

"How anybody makum living without traps?" Jim ventured to cross the madman; then braced himself for an explosion.

Pierre only shook his head gently. "For you, your people, no. *Non*, no odder vay, I'm fear. *Mais non*, it is de odders."

Pierre was unhappily remembering that wilderness trapping is but a small part of a grim business that is carried on hand-in-hand with rural life all over America and many parts of the world, wherever fur is good by reason of climate. Pierre himself had begun as a boy on a Laurentian farm. The Letruc brood had been large, dollars few, and there had been a great triumph in catching a fine red fox! At that time he had always pictured it about the neck of some beautiful lady with a sense of mutual satisfaction—except to the fox, that is. (Or *that was*.)

Now an older Pierre had been doing some sombre thinking during his days of convalescence. And the wonder is that he did not sprout his big idea sooner. Or perhaps not; for had he not renounced the fur trade utterly? And perhaps he was not quite rational at the time; for he had greatly suffered, both physically and spiritually, and now the morbid subject on which he dwelt was forever brought home by Jim returning to skin his catches in yellow lantern light.

No doubt it was the sad depletion of fur-bearers, involving the almost sadder infrequency of Jim's catches, that finally swung Pierre to a constructive form of thought. To kill most all the animals, was that so sad if fewer live to know torture? No. But to have fellows like Jim Two Feathers—good fellows, really—know want, that is sad. If only he could live by some other means! But what?

The solution of this problem, so seemingly simple that you have guessed it, Pierre rejected repeatedly before he grasped at it as the only means. Jim must forsake trapping for the farming of fur. That need not be inhumane. Yet there were a thousand and one obstacles, and as great as the thousand loomed that single one, the human element—meaning Jim.

Pierre was neither a high-pressure salesman nor could he have been in a less favourable

position for the selling of his idea, even at the price asked, which was nothing. So he bided his time and marshalled his arguments, awaiting the most favourable opportunity.

That hour seemed ripest when for the third successive night Jim returned with no more than a few weasels (ermine, worth about forty cents apiece) to reward him for countless weary miles of rough travel. But he found hot soup waiting. Also Pierre.

"Eet is unfortunate," the Frenchman in his bunk consoled, "this so great lack of fur."

Jim more or less silently gave all his attention to his soup. His one flashing glance threw all the blame for his predicament back at Pierre.

"But dere seems one way out of de trobble, my frien'. If all de baby animal w'at is born should live, an' if you 'ave 'em in pen so you collec' de fur, you would 'ave no worry. I mean you should do w'at-you-call-'im—fur ranch. Ever 'ear of it?"

Jim nodded, humouring this madman, who was obviously indulging in one of his queer streaks again.

"I'm t'inking, dese days, suppose you set box-traps for dose animal w'at will breed—de mink, de fox, maybe de fisher—you maybe mak' good beezness yet. *Hein?*"

Jim remained non-committal, apparently chewing only on a tough moose steak and not at all on Letruc's food for thought,

while the crusader put forward his list of points—plenty of fish for cheap feeding, vegetables easily raised, fur taken at its best, improved quality through breeding, in time, and always the assurance of a good living. It meant work, but no more than trapping.

"You going to try it?" Jim finally put in, slyly glancing up from rolling a cigarette.

Pierre's jaw dropped. The possibility had never occurred to him. Was he not through with fur for ever?

Jim Two Feathers laughed and shrugged. If one did not intend to practise what one preached. . . . Talk was cheap.

Pierre consulted his conscience and found that, after all, it was only the setting of steel traps that barred him from the fur business. For his own future he suddenly saw a ray of hope, though he saw it, as yet, but faint and afar off.

"*Oui*, I could. I might," he admitted, and thereby roused instant suspicions in Jim's mind.

"Here?" Jim asked, and to Pierre's denial he merely blew smoke through his nose contemptuously.

That was the first round of many in a battle which Pierre fought in the modern style, with propaganda, repeating constantly his theme of the better life. But Jim could not believe, at first, in the routine business of feeding and caring for animals rather than leaving them to fend for themselves in their natural state. Then, by-and-by, he began to

find favourable arguments himself, such as that normally the fur run is proportionate to the rise and fall of the rabbit population—seven-year cycles brought to their climax by inbreeding and disease—and it was now far from a peak year.

The initiative, however, rested with Pierre, who undertook, as soon as he could hobble from his bed, the construction of wooden box-traps.

Jim Two Feathers eyed these contraptions with mixed feelings. Any type of trap had a certain fascination for him. These were clumsy, though ingeniously contrived. Would they work efficiently? At least there could be no harm in catching an animal this way. Only a lot of trouble. But Jim still thought it best to humour Pierre, obsessed as he was with strange ideas about the inhumanity of steel traps. A strange sympathy, indeed, for those that, whether by nature bound to do so or not, preyed constantly on the weak! So Jim set the traps.

His great moment was to arrive when he found his first catch, a mink. This great moment was one of temptation. Should Jim take the creature home alive and keep it perhaps to die in the summer when worthless? He needed every penny now. Pierre need never know that anything had been caught in this box. But as Jim peered through a crack at the mink, a fine dark one, the Frenchman's propaganda

got to work. This mink was a female. Her young, successfully reared, would be worth six times her value—and much more than that as future breeding stock! It was a toss-up between a long gamble and the need of the moment.

It was not the kind of gamble Jim liked. But he was an exceptional Indian. He took the mink home to a log pen that only needed a hurried completion. Pierre was jubilant. And for the first time he had a smile from Jim.

Of course this mink might not breed. It might be savaged to death by an unwanted mate. It might kill its young. The hazards were innumerable. Then when a fox was caught there were further surmises. Red foxes had no great value as breeders—but if a silver could be had for a mate their litters might throw reds, silvers, and crosses. But money to buy a silver? Money to buy netting and concrete?

As Jim put these questions and Pierre resolutely sought to find the answers, which Jim never would have done alone, the idea of a partnership was born. This had not occurred to Pierre. Nor did it find expression through Jim—till that time when Pierre, his ankle so strong that he could move almost freely, announced it was time to depart.

Thus I found them together in the spring when I called, still curious about the success of Jim's plan for ridding him-

self of a competitor. Jim blushed at sight of me as I entered, just in time for a meal. If a redskin cannot blush it amounted to the same; his countenance was a study as he introduced Pierre. But I did all in my power to save Jim's 'face' when I heard their story and Pierre's eager plans. I encouraged them both to what I secretly believed would be certain failure and disappointment, knowing the odds against them. I congratulated Jim on his catch, a unique way indeed of getting a partner.

Then I 'toured' their 'ranch,' to which stock was still being added, some of this being females carrying young. We spoke in whispers, and no chances were taken that a stranger make nervous the expectant mothers. At long range I gazed on those crude pens set back in the spruce. Even the chopping of fuel, it was whispered, must be done afar off. Dogs were housed at a distance. These hushed communications laid a spell on me—as though through the silence spoke a portent of great things to follow.

But I will not exaggerate

the future success of Jim and Pierre, even for the sake of a story. I never passed that way again. My traps rust in their various caches over a hundred miles of trap-line. My main cabin probably stands, but my out-camps (hovels that they were) must barely be recognisable, unless some other primitive one has taken them over. However, my attention was recently attracted to an advertisement in 'Game and Fur' that spelled news: "*Fishers for sale. Guaranteed as breeders by Two Feathers' Fur Farm, pioneers in the successful breeding of fine northern fishers.*"

I will not exaggerate, either, the effect of this story on me. A half-formed resolution, conscience-begotten, was already in my mind, battling with the call of the wilds that still rings. Like Pierre, I consulted my stars, then took my fate in my hands. And like him I would now be happy to see the day when our old profession had vanished. Yet I do not deceive myself. Our progress from uncivilised beginnings is slow—because it remains for ever a purely individual process.

THE ARYAN PEOPLE AND THE SWASTIKA.

BY THE HON. GEORGE BELLEW, M.V.O., SOMERSET HERALD.

FOUR thousand years ago, when the ancient Semitic civilisations were already long established in the then fertile lands grouped round the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the plains and forests to the north beyond the Danube and the Black Sea were inhabited by an altogether different race of men. These nordic peoples, consisting for the most part of nomad tribes who wandered over Central Europe leading an austere and somewhat primitive life, became subsequently known to history as the Aryans or Aryas.

The Aryan tribes had similar customs and spoke more or less the same language. They had a religion not without beauty, and government by elected leaders, which possessed a communistic flavour. Though they were unable to write, their history was recorded in the memories of their bards, who recited it at great feasts at which, it is said, there was much drunkenness. These people had fair hair and blue eyes, and were possessed of immense stature and strength. As is indicated by their name, which is derived from a Sanskrit word having a meaning equivalent to 'noble,' they were traditionally a race of supermen.

In course of time the Aryan tribes increased and multiplied. No doubt a point was reached

when additional *lebensraum* became a matter of urgency. In any case, it seems that they became aware of the direction in which their vital interests lay; for they began, in increasing waves, to overflow their ancient confines and to penetrate the Southern Mediterranean lands which had for so long been within the Semitic sphere of influence. This eruption did not take place in a month or a year. It took place over a period of six or seven hundred years. The theme of history during the second and first millennia B.C. is the story of this great migration of the Aryan tribes.

The method of expansion employed was naturally enough peaceful wherever possible, wherever, in fact, the local inhabitants of the soil were too weak to resist. But where resistance was encountered, where, it might almost be said, Aryan honour was challenged, then resistance was punished in no uncertain manner. Cities were obliterated, tribes wiped out, nations decimated. The ancient Semitic empires crumbled. The Ægeans, the Sumerians, the Phœnicians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, succumbed to the aggressors one by one. Eventually, after centuries of incessant conflict, the whole of the civilised world,

which had stretched from the Pillars of Hercules to the frontiers of China, was swallowed up and Aryanised.

On the ruins new and improved orders gradually arose. From the chaos there eventually emerged a higher degree of civilisation. The wild Aryan tribesmen found that they possessed a taste for culture. Whereas at first they had possessed a marked propensity for annihilating everything they came upon which savoured of civilisation, they soon learnt to spare that which might be of benefit to them, and to absorb the ready-made enlightenment of those they conquered. They eventually became as constructive as they had been destructive. Although continually at war with each other and with anyone else who, so to speak, challenged their vital interests, they yet managed to lay the foundations of those great civilisations such as the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman Empires, each of which in turn was to dazzle the world and strongly to influence the course of history.

Such is the Aryan saga as it is to be found in the pages of legend and history, and no doubt it is largely true. But the National Socialist Party in Germany are not content with it, and they have developed it. They want the glorious Aryan conquerors to belong exclusively to Germany, and they make the somewhat ambitious claim for the German people of today of a direct

descent, and, moreover, a pure descent in blood, from these noble ancestors. Such a claim has, of course, little foundation in fact, and it is indeed probably not even taken very seriously by the majority of Germans, however much the underlying idea may appeal to their almost pathetically proud natures.

Not that it is to be inferred that Germans of today possess no Aryan blood. Most of them do. But they possess it in minute quantities, and in quantities, for that matter, little or no greater than do, for example, Englishmen, Persians, Frenchmen, Hindus, and many others. Aryan blood is so diluted now that it can scarcely be said to exist. The Germans, of course, inhabit a land which was probably the cradle of the Aryan tribes, but, like any other people with a long history, they have an inevitable admixture of all sorts of foreign racial elements in their blood, and have, to boot, sometimes suffered from long periods of subjugation by peoples as racially different from the Aryas as, for example, the Mongolian Huns, or Tartars, with results unhappily detrimental to the purity of the Aryan German blood-stream.

Not a few Germans at the present time, nevertheless, possess those traditional Aryan features, fair hair and blue eyes. It seems not improbable, in view of what has just been said, that these types are either what may be described as

modern versions of the original Aryan pattern produced naturally by habitation in the locality formerly occupied by the original nordic tribesmen (which locality had presumably produced the original blond nordic type from some primordial type of man), or else perhaps simply atavistic 'throw-backs' to a pattern so remote that such reversion can only be accidental.

Sometimes mention is made, in connection with German racial philosophy, of the Aryan language. The Aryan tongue, as spoken by the original Aryas, was apparently superior to those used by other ancient peoples, in that it was more expressive and perhaps more euphonious. When the Aryas emigrated, their language, like their racial purity, became diluted. But in spite of mixture, in spite of natural linguistic evolution and, above all, in spite of the long passage of time, a large group of languages, known as the Indo-European or Indo-Germanic group, still contains words which are sufficiently similar to be recognisable as of common derivation from the original Aryan. This group of languages, consisting of German, English, Latin, Greek, Persian, Hindu, and a hundred others, is sometimes somewhat vaguely referred to as the Aryan languages, and the nations who speak them are equally vaguely referred to as the Aryan-speaking nations.

A history full of traditional glory is a possession to be treasured by any nation, and

particularly perhaps by a nation which has been cast down and is anxious to resurrect itself. Recollection of such a history fortifies and stimulates those who have to make the necessary recuperative effort. Whether the history be fact or fiction is of no very great importance. What is important is that the fallen people should be constantly reminded of it. For such purposes symbols have been used all through the course of history. Symbols can convey profound messages to the minds of men in one instant of vision and help to guide their thoughts in desired directions.

Fortunately for the founders of the Nazi Party in Germany, a suitable symbol was readily at hand in the shape of the swastika. The swastika possessed definite, though not exclusive, Aryan associations. They claimed that it had been used by the Aryas as their particular emblem wherever they penetrated, wherever they migrated, ever since those remote days when they first began to bring peace through war to the world. It therefore served admirably to remind present-day Germans of the past achievements of their noble race and to encourage them to emulate their chimerical ancestors. It identified National Socialism with the traditional racial glory. It symbolised this glory as their rightful inheritance, a glory which was dormant but not dead, and which indeed, given the necessary leadership, could be resurrected.

The swastika is an Aryan symbol in the sense that it seems to have been used all through history by Aryan-speaking peoples, that is to say, by those whose language is derived from the original Aryan tongue, more consistently than by other peoples. This, admittedly, is equivalent to saying that it has been in almost universal use. The name itself, *swastika*, is derived from *svasti*, a Sanskrit word having a meaning akin to "Let it be well" or "Hail!", Sanskrit being one of the languages of Aryan derivation. In recent centuries the swastika symbol has, in most countries of the world, been the popular talisman for good luck, good health, long life, and kindred blessings.

Although perhaps the Nazi Party were not unaware of its auspicious meaning when they adopted it as their party badge, they no doubt chose it principally on account of its association with the Aryan race and with the traditional march of conquest of the Aryan peoples.

But the Nazi symbol is of greater antiquity than Aryan history, which is but four thousand years old. It is a prehistoric symbol, and has apparently been used by man during the whole period of his development. It is probably, in fact, the oldest symbol on earth.

Not less remarkable than its impressive age is its wide range of use in the past. It is found in early use in countries as far apart as China and Mexico,

Scandinavia and Persia, India and Switzerland. Everywhere, though perhaps less frequently among peoples of Semitic origin, and seldom if at all among negroid peoples, it is found depicted on the gods, the buildings, and the household goods of the peoples of the world from prehistoric to present times. It appears on the stone implements of primitive man and on the first Hindu coins. It is depicted on the pottery of ancient Crete and on the clothing of North American Indians, on the sacred footprints of Buddha in Ceylon, and, according to one authority, on the mitre of Thomas à Becket.

The opinion is generally held that the swastika originally, at the time of its invention (if indeed it was an invention and not a development of some yet more primitive pictograph), had some affinity to the sun. Such slender clues as exist point in this direction. It may have been the sign for the daily recurrence of the sun, or for the sun as the giver of life, or for recurring life, or for eternity. Or perhaps it symbolised the heat of the sun, or fire, or the fruits of the earth which owe their existence to the sun's warmth, or fertility. It may have symbolised any or all of these. Its form seems certainly to suggest an allusion to something constantly recurring. It is not improbable that while it consistently retained throughout its history a meaning having always at

least a similar flavour, it nevertheless changed, within these limits, its meaning from time to time, according to the place and circumstance in which it found itself.

This would perhaps account for the variety of interpretations which have been placed upon it by different writers. Thus it is said by some to have been the particular emblem of the God of the Winds in primitive mythology. Others suggest that it was the emblem of the God of the Waters; and others again say the God of Light, and of Lightning. It has been ascribed to the ancient Moon God of Ur, called Nannar, and also to the Hindu God of Fire, Agni; likewise to Indra, the Hindu God of the Skies and particularly of Rain; and it is said to represent, in later Hindu sacred science, the Triad consisting of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. In Greek mythology the swastika is sometimes attributed to Zeus, the principal of the Olympian thearchy, and again to Hera, his wife, and sister. It is also identified with Astarte, the Goddess of Love, and with many other deities. It has been described as a symbol of the British Druids, a version of the Egyptian cross of life, called the *ankh*, a representation of the sticks with which the Hindu Fire God generated his sacred flame, and a form of the Chinese letters c, h, e, denoting excellence.

This versatility can hardly be accepted in its entirety.

Nevertheless many, if not most, of these attributes and meanings have some relation to one another, as also to the swastika's presumed original solar affinity, and again to its more recent auspicious meaning. There is no great gulf in the association of ideas.

What significance then, it may be asked, did the primitive Aryan tribes attach to it? What did it signify to them before they migrated to become Hindus, Persians, Greeks, and Romans? The bow can only be drawn at a venture. It is said that the Aryas used to have in their midst special functionaries, connected with their religious practices, called fire-makers. Presumably these priests made fire with two sticks. Perhaps they did it ceremoniously with special kinds of sticks shaped like the swastika's arms. The swastika has been later associated with the Aryan Hindu God of Fire, Agni, and with his sacred fire-sticks. As good a hazard as any other, therefore, is that the symbol in the religion of the ancient Aryas had some connection with fire or with the generation of fire.

In form the true swastika has its arms bent in the direction of the passage of the sun, or clockwise. The reversed swastika is found at all periods, but is rare, and it seems probable that when thus depicted, its reversal is intentional in order to achieve symmetry in some design, or else it is a pardonable error. It has no

different meaning to the true swastika. It is sometimes said that the symbol is 'male' or 'female' according to whether it is true or reversed, but it is difficult to find any support for this idea. It matters not, also, whether it stands squarely or diagonally: that seems to be a question of taste. It is depicted in both positions in Germany today.

The world's most notorious symbol has other names besides swastika. It has been called broken cross, and cross of Byzantium, gammadion (from its form of four Greek gammas placed together), and crux dissimulata (of the persecuted Christians who strove thus to disguise their sacred emblem). No doubt, in its long and ubiquitous career, it has had a thousand names. In Germany today it is called *svastika*, or *hakenkreuz*, the latter meaning simply hooked cross.

In heraldry, that science of hereditary symbols which came into being in the twelfth century A.D., it is designated 'cross potent rebated' or 'cross cramponnee,' and sometimes 'fylfot.' A 'cross potent' is a cross with each limb terminated in the form of a 'potent,' which is an archaic word for crutch, or

crutch-head, and 'rebated' means partly removed. 'Cramponnee' means 'in the form of a crampon,' which the dictionary describes as a kind of grappling-iron or hook. 'Fylfot' may be a corrupted archaic form of 'four-foot,' or it may possibly, but not probably, mean 'fill foot' (said to be in reference to the symbol's purely decorative use in filling up the foot of some design).

It might be thought that being such a universal emblem and being, indeed, favoured with no less than three names in heraldic blazon, it would be of common use in heraldry. This is far from being the case. Its use in heraldry is rare, and, in English heraldry, so rare that up to the middle of the nineteenth century it is hard to find an example. Thus an antiquary, writing on such matters in the year 1842, stated that he could find but one instance of the swastika's use in heraldry, an instance, however, which, in the light of present political circumstances, is curiously coincidental. It is a Coat of Arms, having a chevron between three swastikas, which belongs, he says, to a family by the name of Chamberlain.

"THE NAME AT WHICH THE WORLD GREW PALE."

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL F. E. WHITTON, C.M.G.

CONSIDERED merely as a head-dress, a crown is an awkward thing. From the very nature of its construction it is bound to be top-heavy, and a close fit is essential. To try to mount a horse—and kings' horses are sometimes restive animals—when the rider has a crown on his head for the first time, is to ask for trouble. That is what young Charles XII. of Sweden—he was only fifteen at the time—found to his cost on the 26th December 1697.

It was entirely his own fault. He was leaving the palace in Stockholm *to be* crowned in the Riddarholm Church, but he had insisted on wearing the crown, and on carrying the royal sceptre, on his ride through the city to the coronation ceremony. Quite wrong, of course, but the wilful and headstrong lad was determined to show his ministers and senators, his counsellors and his soldiers, that he was king by right and not as a result of any solemn ceremonial. So he came out of his palace with the crown upon his head: he placed foot in stirrup: his horse—which had never seen a crowned head before—started fearfully: off fell the crown. Courtiers scrambled for it and replaced it on the young king's head, and he mounted all right this time. But there were

not a few who shook their heads at what seemed rather a grave omen.

The boy King, as he rode slowly through the city, through a swirling snowstorm, crowned and sceptred, mounted on a big chestnut shod with silver, made a gallant sight. Tall and handsome, with an expression of haughty sternness which belied his tender years, he looked every inch a king. He was a beautiful rider and sat the big chestnut like a centaur. Arrived at the church for the long and solemn religious ceremony, Charles, of necessity, doffed the crown for the sacring and the unction. But when the Archbishop of Upsala reverently took it up to replace it upon the head of the King, Charles snatched it from the Archbishop's hands and crowned himself, while gazing fixedly at the startled prelate. The act was significant, and foreshadowed the iron resolution and the superb self-confidence of the young new King of Sweden.

The Sweden to whose throne this determined boy had succeeded was vastly different, both in actual extent and relatively to the rest of Europe, from the Sweden of today. In extent it was one of the largest States of Europe, com-

prising, as it did, not only the Sweden of today but Finland as well, and, in addition, that strip of Russia upon which St Petersburg—now Leningrad—was later to be built. Esthonia and a portion of Latvia were also part of Sweden, and she still possessed some of her former Pomeranian territory in the shape of an enclave on German soil, which had Stettin at one end and Stralsund at the other. Unquestionably Sweden had proved herself a military power of the first magnitude; she owned, also, a powerful navy; and was, admittedly, in those days, one of the Great Powers of Europe. It is worth remembering, too, that of the handful of Great Captains from whose exploits, in the opinion of Napoleon, the whole art of war could be learned, one was a Swedish King—Gustavus Adolphus, the great-granduncle of young Charles XII. So far, however, as population was concerned Sweden had an element of weakness; for its inhabitants numbered merely some two and a half millions, or less than half the number dwelling in the much more restricted Sweden of today.

We are, perhaps, too inclined to believe nowadays that uncalled-for aggression by rulers of States is quite a modern development. When the young Charles XII. was beginning his reign there was a trio of European monarchs who burned to seize the opportunity of snatching what they could, mainly

at the expense of Sweden and its boy King. The gangster sovereigns on the make were the King of Denmark (and Norway), the King of Poland, and the half-barbarian Tsar of Muscovy, Peter—later called the Great. The Swedish ministers were not unnaturally alarmed at this formidable coalition, and entreated their King to have recourse to negotiations. Charles, however, was of sterner fibre. "Gentlemen," he declared, "I shall never wage an unjust war, nor shall I ever finish a just one except by the destruction of my enemies. The first enemy to declare himself I shall attack: when I have beaten him I hope to put fear into the others." With this firm resolve he set himself a régime of conduct from which he never departed. He gave up even the most innocent amusements of youth. He hardened himself by the most rigorous exercise. He inured himself to danger by feats of horsemanship, sometimes of appalling recklessness. He gave up all thoughts of marriage: more still *il renonça aux femmes pour jamais*. He forswore wine. The epithet he was to win for himself, *Mars sine Venere*; *Alexander sine vino*, was to be no empty phrase. Charles in those years of adolescence lived like an ascetic; he had a habit of silence almost abnormal; his fare was Spartan; all luxury in dress and splendour of appointments were put aside. He burned to rival Alexander and

Cæsar, while rigidly abstaining from their vices. Abstinence, self-discipline, self-control, and the strict observance of religion were the guiding stars of his existence. Weakness he despised; and if he did have a craving it was indeed a harmless one, a passion for orange marmalade.

The first enemy to be dealt with was the King of Denmark, who was bent on capturing Holstein, of which the brother-in-law of Charles was the reigning duke. The war, however, was to spread over a theatre much wider than the mere duchy of Holstein. Siding with the Danes were various contingents from Germany: to aid the 8000 soldiers of the King of Sweden there were troops from Hanover and Celle, and three regiments from Holland. Further, two fleets, one English and one Dutch, made their appearance in the Baltic ready to assist, if necessary, the young Swedish King.

Charles left Stockholm for his first campaign on the 8th of May 1700. He was not yet eighteen years of age. Already half of his life lay behind him. He was never to see his capital again, and—except for a few brief weeks—not until years of warfare and captivity had ended, was he to return to his native land. His departure was an imposing spectacle; for his fleet comprised forty-three vessels, the flagship, the *King Charles*, of 120 guns, being the largest ship of war then afloat.

The war itself—if it can rightly be so called—need not detain us long; but if it was short and almost bloodless, this was due largely to the daring of Charles, who forced his nervous and hesitating admiral to attempt the dangerous passage of the eastern channel of the Sound, hitherto reported to be unnavigable. A landing of the Swedes was thus made possible on the island of Zealand, but a few miles north of Copenhagen. Charles himself leaped from one of the foremost boats, sword in hand, and struggled through water up to his waist. The landing was opposed by a heavy musketry fire from the Danes, and the buzzing of the bullets surprised Charles, who asked an officer accompanying him what was it that made the curious sound. On learning the cause the King replied, "That will be my music henceforth." At that moment his informant fell wounded, and a young lieutenant next to him was shot dead.

Charles was determined to push on and capture Copenhagen, but more prudent counsels prevailed. Peace was signed on the 18th August, by which the King of Denmark renounced his claims on Holstein and agreed to pay a large indemnity. There had indeed been practically no fighting, but all Europe was greatly impressed by the achievement of an eighteen-year-old king, who, within the short space of six weeks, by his masterly

conduct of an amphibious expedition had reduced a strong enemy to absolute submission. As Carlyle in the greatest of his works has put it: "It was like the bursting of a cataract of bombshells in a dull ballroom, the sudden appearance of this young fighting Swede among the luxurious Kings and Kinglets of the North, all lounging about and languidly minuetting in that manner regardless of expense."¹

The two other gangsters, the King of Poland and the Tsar of Muscovy, had, however, banked on a very different result. Hoping that the boy king would make a mess of things in Denmark, they were both preparing to play their part in the game of territorial grab. The King of Poland was investing Riga, the capital of Livonia, and the Tsar was marching from the east at the head of a large army—according to some reports, a hundred thousand strong. Charles did not hesitate to accept the challenge. Immediately he had brought his army back to Sweden he made preparations for another expedition to Livonia, and accordingly, in the first week in October, he sailed from Carlshamm at the head of two hundred transports, conveying an army of something less than 10,000 of all ranks. The voyage was rough and stormy. On the 6th of October the fleet reached Pernau in safety, and the immediate object

was to march southwards to relieve Riga. That city was, however, no longer in danger; for the King of Poland had discovered the task to be far more formidable than he had imagined, and had raised the siege. Charles was therefore able to turn his attention to the Russian menace. On the southern shores of the Gulf of Finland, some hundred and fifty miles north-east of Pernau, the town of Narva was gravely threatened by the Russian advance, and Charles at once determined to cross swords with the Tsar Peter. Against that monarch the King of Sweden felt a particular animosity, for Peter had but lately renewed a non-aggression pact with Sweden. (Surely Lord Bryce was wrong when he declared "*History never repeats itself.*") The reasons Peter gave for declaring war were almost Nazi-like in their absurdity; he alleged that insufficient honours had been rendered him when he had passed through Riga *incognito*; and took exception to the fact that his ambassadors had been overcharged for provisions. Can we not almost hear the word 'provocative' from the Chrysostom Dr Goebbels?

Even with the addition of the Swedish troops from Riga, set free by the raising of the siege, the force available for the relief of Narva numbered only nine thousand; and although reinforcements which

¹ 'Frederick the Great' Book IV.

had landed at Reval were daily expected, Charles, in spite of the protests of his senior officers, declined to wait. The march was begun on 13th November, under terrible conditions. On all sides the country had been ravaged by the invaders, so that neither shelter nor supplies were forthcoming; and owing to the difficulties of transport all but the barest necessities had been left behind. The weather was severe, and the roads were over a foot deep in half-frozen mud. On the third day's march a narrow gorge was encountered, held by a strong detachment of Russian cavalry which had just arrived. Taken by surprise the Russians abandoned the pass, and in such confusion that they scarcely drew rein until they had rejoined the main body. Three days later the Swedish army bivouacked nine miles short of their goal. This was the sixth night they had spent in the open, half-frozen, and short of rations. Before daylight on the following morning they were again on the march; toward mid-day they debouched on to the small plain before Narva.¹

At two o'clock in the afternoon the Swedes advanced to the attack, the signal for which was the firing of two rockets. The watchword was "With God's help." Immediately the advance began a snowstorm swept across the plain towards the Russian lines, an obvious

advantage for the attackers. One of the Swedish generals ventured to point out to the King the danger of the venture on which he was now engaged, but Charles instantly replied: "What? Do you think that with my eight thousand brave Swedes I cannot triumph over eighty thousand Muscovites?" The odds against Charles were not quite so formidable as that, but it is difficult to speak with certainty of the Russian forces and especially to discriminate between the numbers immobilised by the investment of Narva and those available for mobile work in the field against the relieving force. We shall not, however, be very far wrong if we say that the Swedes were outnumbered by nearly five to one.

The battle had opened with artillery fire from the Swedes against the trenches in which the Russians were sheltering. Then came a bayonet charge all along the line, Charles himself being on the extreme left with some cavalry. He had chosen that position because the Russian Imperial Headquarters were directly opposite, and Charles had entertained the hope that he might see the Tsar and have it out with him in personal combat. As the Swedish line swept forward Charles cried out, "Now is the time with the storm at our backs. They will never see how few we are." A spent bullet struck him on the throat,

¹ Eveline Godley. 'Charles XII.,' p. 53.

but luckily became embedded in the fold of his cravat. Shortly afterwards his horse was killed under him. Charles leaped on the back of one of his spare chargers, jesting with his aides as he did so.

Blinded by the snow and overwhelmed by the vehemence of the onslaught, the Russians gave way and broke. Their right wing was the first to falter, and within half an hour the outer siege works were occupied by the Swedes. The Russians, in headlong flight, turned at first to their right, attempting to escape into the open. Driven back with great slaughter by the Swedish cavalry under the King's command, they made for the river, west of the town; but the bridge as they crossed gave way beneath the throng of fugitives. Hundreds were drowned or crushed to death. Those who failed to reach the river made a stand of some hours behind some hutments. Here the fighting was desperate, but by evening the Swedes had finally established their advantage. Elsewhere the Russians could not withstand the Swedish onrush. Darkness fell with several Russian battalions still intact, but their officers—many of them Germans—were too demoralised, and the men too much out of control, for the fight to continue. By midnight all was over. The losses of the Swedes had been very small; the Russians, in killed alone, are said to have lost 18,000—possibly an exag-

gerated figure; a great number were drowned; the prisoners taken, including the acting commander-in-chief, exceeded the total number of Swedes who had won this crushing victory.

King Charles in the fight had sought in vain for the Tsar of Muscovy. Peter had fled. The night but one before the battle, the courage of that savage colossus had failed him. Even gargantuan draughts of brandy could not nerve him for the fight. He had hurriedly handed over command to the German general, Von Croy, and had then rushed eastwards nominally to organise matters of reserves and ammunition supply; in reality to save his own skin.

All Europe rang with acclamation at the amazing exploit of the boy King Charles XII., not yet nineteen years of age. In his own country he became a national hero; he was acclaimed a worthy representative of the great Vasa dynasty; and regarded as one who would rival in military fame the great Gustavus Adolphus himself. A commemorative medal was struck at Stockholm. On one side were the figures of a Dane, a Russian, and a Pole in chains. On the other was a youthful Hercules with a club, and underneath the motto, *Tres uno contudit icto*, "With one blow he felled the three." This was not the only medal struck to commemorate Narva. If all Europe rang with acclamations for Charles, it rocked with laughter over Peter. Car-

toonists depicted him on the run with his hat falling off his head; a medal on the same lines was soon in circulation. The amazing victory of Narva was for long a subject of interest to the Great Powers. Among the masses in Russia it was believed that the Swedes were supernatural beings, and public prayers were recited to St Nicholas, the patron of Moscow, imploring him to deal with the sorcerers who had brought such destruction to the Russian army.

But Charles of Sweden had not yet done with Peter of Russia. The great hideous, bloodthirsty, and timorous Tsar was a man who could learn anything he set his mind to; there was never a human being who could so profit by experience. In his young days Peter had such a terror of water that he must pull the curtains of his carriage in passing by a bridge across a river; yet boats became the passion of his life; he worked in Amsterdam and London as a common shipwright; he studied the theory and practice of naval architecture; he was the father of the Russian navy.¹ He could learn strategy if it suited his book to do so, and could grasp the principles of tactics if he applied himself to the task. What is more, he could learn courage, and the great drunken boor who would scream at the sight of a black beetle could, if the

need arose, stand firm and undaunted under fire. Before this story closes Charles and Peter will meet again. The sun will go down on one of the Decisive Battles of the World. Russia will emerge from obscurity and Sweden will cease to be a great military Power.

After Narva, Charles XII. stood at the parting of the ways. Ought he to follow up his victory by pursuing the broken Russians, or should he turn aside and give a lesson to the treacherous King of Poland? It is a question invested with points of exceptional military and political interest, but entirely beyond the scope of this article. Charles had now begun to despise the Russians. His crushing victory seemed to imply that they were a mere rabble of armed peasants, commanded by indifferent officers, and serving a monarch who ran away before the battle had even begun. The troops of Augustus would be more worthy of his steel, and it was against them that Charles decided to carry on the war. This decision was to imply that Charles would spend the next seven years of his life either in Poland or in contiguous parts of Central Europe, and that he was there to play to some extent the part of *arbiter mundi*. We must, however, confine ourselves merely to his military achievements of the period and touch in

¹ See "Peter: A Navy Builder." 'Blackwood's Magazine,' October 1933.

but the lightest manner upon the balance of power in Europe, to which he was such a contributory factor.

In dealing with the King of Poland, King Charles XII. would have to engage not merely Polish troops, but also Saxons; for Augustus, King of Poland, was Elector of Saxony as well. Poland at that time was a country as large as France, with a constitution and an internal régime which require a moment's consideration. Nominally a republic, it was governed by a king. The monarchy, however, was not hereditary, but elective; the sovereign need not necessarily be a Polish subject; and the crown was practically for sale, whenever a vacancy occurred. At the last vacancy there had been eighteen candidates, and by a most lavish expenditure of money Augustus, Elector of Saxony, secured the crown, his most dangerous competitor being one of the Bourbon princes of France.

On the 17th June 1701 Charles marched southwards to wreak his vengeance on Augustus. It was his nineteenth birthday. Important reinforcements had reached him during the spring, and it was with an army of some fifteen thousand men that he set out to force the passage of the Dwina, near Riga. The opposite bank was held by the Saxons in force, but, deceiving the enemy, Charles effected a crossing at a point which the enemy had considered as unfavourable for the Swedes. The ingenuity of Charles found full play in this operation.

He had barges constructed with high sides which could be raised or lowered at will; when in the raised position the sides gave cover from musketry fire, and, when the barges gained the farther bank, the high side next the bank could be lowered to form a ramp for disembarkation. Another artifice he employed was a smoke-screen. Having noticed that the wind was blowing across the river towards the opposite bank, Charles caused heaps of damp straw to be stacked in the bows of the barges, and, the straw being set alight, the Saxons were blinded at the critical moment when the barges came within range.

Charles, however, was not to win the other bank without a struggle. The Saxons hurried to reinforce that part of the river line where the crossing had been effected, and, stout soldiers that they were, attacked with such vigour that the covering troops of the Swedes were thrown into great confusion, and in some cases even driven back into the river. Charles, however, was coolness personified. He had been mortified beyond measure at having been only the fourth man to set foot on the enemy's bank; now, standing in the river, he rallied his troops as nonchalantly as if he were on parade. The Swedes 'came again.' The battle which ensued was fierce and bloody, but the Swedes had the advantage in numbers and the Saxons were woefully deficient in artillery. The end was not long delayed.

The Saxons broke and fled, and the whole province of Courland fell into the hands of Charles.

The greater part of the next nine months was occupied in 'cleaning up,' in resting and refitting, and in dealing with the representatives of the various Powers who came to try to coax or cajole the young king to take this side or that in the coalitions which were forming in Europe upon the question of the Spanish Succession. Charles, however, had marked out his own line; he was determined to dethrone the King of Poland and to replace him by a Polish nominee of his own. And so in the early spring of 1702 the Swedish army set out for Warsaw and occupied it on 14th May. No opposition was encountered; for on the approach of the Swedes Augustus had fled towards Cracow, taking with him as many of the crown jewels as he could lay hands on.

A fortnight later Charles set out from Warsaw in pursuit of the King of Poland, and after a march of over a hundred and twenty miles came up with Augustus and his Saxon army in a vast plain near the village of Klissow. The Saxons had a great superiority in numbers, a superiority which would be still further increased by the arrival of six thousand Polish horsemen, who were hourly expected. Reconnoitring the Saxon position, Charles decided at once that its extent and strength made a frontal attack out of the question;

his sole hope was, under cover from view, to side-step his army to the left and there partially to enlatch the Saxon position. The movement succeeded admirably, even though the Saxon right wing was at the last moment reinforced by the Polish cavalry. These latter charged with characteristic dash and courage, but the Polish lancers met their match in the Swedish musketry and the Swedish pikemen. The Poles turned and fled, and the Saxon right gave with it. On the other flank the Swedish troops had a harder task, and for a time were sore pressed, but a series of brilliant cavalry charges crushed the Saxon left, and by evening the whole Polish-Saxon army was streaming from the field. It was the third pitched battle that Charles had fought. Three times he had routed his enemy. And he was but a few weeks over twenty years of age.

Cracow lay three or four days' march farther on, and Charles wasted no time in hurrying towards Poland's ancient capital. A detachment, four hundred strong, was sent on ahead to summon the place to surrender. The demand was refused, and while the parleying was proceeding Charles himself appeared in front of the closed gate and shouted for it to be opened immediately. This time the summons was obeyed, and Charles and the foremost of the Swedes flung themselves through the entrance, and in a few moments were masters of the adjoining streets. The

Polish garrison offered no resistance. Not a shot was fired, and, according to Voltaire,¹ the defenders were driven *à coup de fouet et de canne* to the castle, followed by Charles and his Swedes, where the governor of the fortress formally surrendered. Augustus, however, had slipped away betimes, and the inexorable Charles once more took up the pursuit, after leaving three Swedish regiments to hold Cracow.

The next four years in the career of Charles must be but briefly summarised. They were years with a good deal of fighting—if without any outstanding battle—but they were years of a so-called 'pacification' of Poland and the elevation to the Polish throne of a nominee of Charles, in lieu of Augustus deposed. Augustus, however, did not take his deposition 'lying down,' as we might say, and there was for a time a kind of civil war in Poland with Poles (on one side or the other), Saxons, Swedes, and Russians (coming to assist Augustus) all engaged. The war—if such it can be called—has not for us today the remotest interest. All that need be said is that Charles XII. prevailed; Augustus fled to his electoral dominions; and on the 5th August 1706 Charles crossed the Vistula and established himself in Saxony with his army. Eventually he fixed his headquarters at Alt-Ranstadt, a few miles from Leipzig.

In the year 1706 the War

of the Spanish Succession had been raging for four years, and in it half Europe was engaged. The Allies had gained immense military advantages. The French had been defeated at Blenheim and Ramillies. England had captured Gibraltar and occupied Barcelona. Nevertheless, these advantages were seriously threatened by the appearance of the new and extraordinary actor on the stage of affairs. The young Charles of Sweden had bound victory to his chariot wheels, and, established in Central Europe, was now imperiously requiring the Great Powers to recognise the changes he had made in Poland, and adopting a peremptory tone concerning questions of a territorial and religious nature. The appearance of this military meteor, and the presence of a numerous and victorious army, attracted the attention of all the States who were engaged in the mighty struggle for the Spanish throne; for it was evident that the accession of so considerable a force would give the preponderance to the side the King of Sweden might espouse.

By 1707 so pressing was the danger, and so determined were the efforts of France to secure both the goodwill and co-operation of Charles, that the English Government directed Marlborough himself to seek a personal interview with the King of Sweden, with the least possible delay. Quitting the Hague on the 20th of April

¹ 'Histoire de Charles XII.' Livre I.

1707, Marlborough passed through Hanover and arrived in due course at Alt-Ranstadt. The military and diplomatic conversations which ensued have for us but an academic interest; for Charles was quite unconcerned about the question whether or no a grandson of the King of France should be allowed to succeed to the Spanish throne. His thoughts were turned eastwards. The Tsar Peter was the treacherous enemy who must be taught another and sharper lesson. "We will treat the Tsar in a manner which posterity will hardly believe." "Should the Tsar refuse the King's conditions, then His Majesty is resolved to exterminate the Muscovites and make their country a desert." Such were some of the remarks of the ministers of Charles at the time, and the decision of the King of Sweden to stand aloof from the Spanish Succession business is easily understood.

But if the conversations have no interest for us now, the interview gave onlookers and participants an opportunity to record some personal details of the young King. He struck observers as "a tall handsome gentleman, but entirely careless of his personal appearance, and indeed slovenly in his dress." He kept a wretched table and would eat hurriedly and in complete silence. One observer reported that the King would spread the butter on his bread with his thumb. Of more interest than these table manners

are remarks made by members of his household concerning the military ideas of Charles. "The King's great principle was always to undertake what was most difficult, because the enemy were less on their guard, and took less precautions." Charles's predilection for cavalry was also a frequent subject of discussion; he was 'extremely fond' of his Dragoons, whom he frequently used as infantry—as was indeed one of the main features of the employment of Dragoon regiments. He could work his cavalry hard; on one occasion he marched eighty leagues without unsaddling the horses, feeding them with thatch from the houses.

There was nothing now to prevent Charles from turning his victorious arms against the Tsar. It was indeed high time; for during the last seven years, while Charles had been prosecuting his personal revenge in Poland and Saxony, Peter of Russia had been steadily advancing upon the Baltic at the expense of Sweden. He had actually retaken Narva, the scene of his ignominious defeat; more still, he had seized the estuary of the Neva, and there he had constructed his 'little window to the west,' soon to be known at St Petersburg. Clearly the policy of Charles should now have aimed at the expulsion of the Tsar from these acquisitions and the destruction of Peter's new capital. But the fiery spirit

of the King of Sweden burned with vaster desire. He would crush the Tsar in his ancient capital of Moscow, and in August 1707 he quitted Saxony at the head of a Swedish army 44,000 strong, more than half of which consisted of cavalry.

Delayed in Poland during the autumn months, owing to the tardy arrival of reinforcements from Pomerania, Charles resumed his advance in November. Peter proceeded to garrison the whole line of the Dnieper, and though Charles crossed the Beresina without loss he was obliged to fight a desperate battle at the River Wabis, where victory was snatched from defeat only by the exceptionally brilliant action of the Swedish cavalry. And now it became gradually clear to Charles, as a century later it was to become clear to Napoleon, that even if Russians were defeated in open fight they had other methods of resistance. The country over which the Swedes must advance was burnt by the Russians; all food and supplies were destroyed; and the invading army was harried incessantly by swarms of Tartar horsemen. Before the year was out, even the sanguine and self-reliant King Charles had to acknowledge that Moscow could not be reached.

Again in his military career Charles stood at the parting of the ways. And now, as never before, he was the prey of irresolution, and for once in his life he consulted his subordinate officers. They

counselled him to fall back on the Dnieper and to await the arrival of a strong column of reinforcements and supplies endeavouring to reach him from Riga. But this would imply a movement indistinguishable from retreat, and the haughty King, to whom military glory was now an obsession, declined to consider the proposal. Instead he decided to move southward and invade Russia through the Ukraine. There the Cossacks were ready to co-operate with him against the Tsar, and their hetman, Mazeppa, had promised to bring 30,000 Cossack horsemen to his aid.

And so in the early days of September 1708 Charles and his army crossed the Russian frontier. The die was now cast. The stakes were high. Even at the opening of the game Fortune turned her face aside. The assistance expected from Mazeppa proved to be negligible. The Tsar Peter had attacked him in force, and when Mazeppa joined Charles on the 8th of November it was as a fugitive with but some thirteen hundred personal attendants. Graver tidings were soon to come. Charles's immensely long line of communications was in deadly danger from a Russian thrust, and the straggling column of reinforcements and supplies was attacked by an overwhelmingly superior force. The Swedish commander was utterly defeated. He was compelled to destroy all his artillery and stores, after which he had the greatest

difficulty in securing his own retreat.

In the Ukraine Charles found some supplies for his troops, but he was constantly surrounded by swarms of horsemen anxious to gain the sum of money promised by the Tsar for every Swede brought in dead or alive. Then the very elements began to fight against the invaders. From December till the following February Europe was in the grip of a winter such as no one living could recall. The canals of Venice were frozen. The mouth of the Tagus was blocked with ice. Upon the wind-swept plains of the Ukraine the intensity of the cold was appalling. Even the Swedes, inured to northern winters, were not proof against it. Many were frozen to death. Thousands were incapacitated by frost-bite. Charles shared to the full the hardships of his men, and "Though earth, sea, and sky were against us, the King's orders were obeyed, and the daily march performed." Yet, when the winter had passed, the situation of the Swedish army was hazardous in the extreme. It had lost about half its strength; supplies were extremely short; and, as no lines of communication were in existence, Charles and his army were marooned in enemy territory, some nine hundred miles from their native land. Worse than all, the fighting spirit of the troops, which the winter had starved and frozen

out of them, had not returned with the spring. Where the King led, the soldiers followed. But the old irresistible fire was gone.¹

Yet not for a moment would Charles think of retreat. He resolved to march on Poltava and to besiege that fortress while awaiting reinforcements which he had ordered from Saxony and Poland. But as a siege the operation was a complete failure; for the army of Charles was numerically far too weak completely to invest the place, and it was not long before the Swedes themselves were practically besieged by the Russians. In addition, summer was now reaching its height, and the Swedes suffered severely from the extreme heat. Supplies of food ran short, and the water caused much sickness. To crown all, Charles himself was severely wounded. Riding with his staff along the river bank the King was struck in the foot by a bullet fired from the town. The ball entered by the heel and broke some of the smaller bones of the foot. Charles made light of the blow, but the damage was serious, and for the time he was utterly incapacitated from riding. This terrible mishap, which deprived the army of the active leadership of the King, happened on 17th June 1709, his twenty-seventh birthday.

In spite of the heroism with which Charles submitted to the drastic and clumsy surgery

¹ Godley, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

of the day, he remained totally unable to take the saddle or to supervise operations. The news reached the Russian camp; the Tsar at once resolved upon an aggressive policy. He crossed the river, moved closer to the fortress, and entrenched himself in a position whence he might attack Charles when he chose. The Swedish troops were now in a position of real peril. Obviously if they were not to be starved out they must risk all on a battle. On the evening of the 27th June a council of war was held at the King's bedside, and it was resolved to attack the Russians on the following day.

The King had himself carried on a litter to the fight. The initial attacks were carried out by the Swedes with something of their old fire and vigour, and were rewarded by success. But the accustomed leadership was wanting. The wounded King, slowly conveyed from point to point on his litter, could not control or direct the fight, as he had been wont to do on horseback; nor could he retrieve a momentary set-back by placing himself at the head of some of his fiery squadrons and charging 'into the brown.' Confusion ensued; there was even wrangling and dispute between some of the generals; and Peter was eventually enabled to mass 40,000 troops against the exhausted Swedish right wing of but one-tenth of that number. With desperate courage these flung themselves on the Russians, only to be engulfed

in the vast masses of the enemy. Charles had still been carried about on his litter, but the bearers were knocked over by a cannon-shot, and the litter itself was shattered. Instantly there was a shout of "Save the King!" and Charles was placed upon a horse, his leg resting on the animal's neck. Soon a Russian bullet brought horse and rider to the ground; a wounded officer gave up his mount to the King, who was hurried from the field. All was now over. The Swedish infantry had been annihilated. The 14,000 cavalry, exhausted and demoralised, could make no further effort and surrendered two days later, and Charles, the spoilt child of victory and the hero of his age, was painfully making the long journey to the Turkish frontier, escorted by some fifteen hundred horsemen salvaged from the wreckage of the Swedish army.

From Poltava to the Turkish frontier of that time was a journey of about a hundred and fifty miles, and a trying and hazardous journey for the wounded King and his escort, the rear-guard being incessantly attacked by a Russian force. Eventually Charles reached Bender, on the Dniester, an important Turkish fortress in what is the Rumania of today, his escort having now shrunk to about five hundred of all ranks. The Turks received the fugitive monarch with every honour and respect, and indeed deemed themselves fortunate in having on Turkish soil the

most formidable enemy of their greatest foe, Russia. And when the Turks discovered that this Christian warrior was entirely unattracted by wine or women, and that he scorned luxury and splendour, they began to regard him as a holy man and approached him with feelings of veneration.

For nearly two years Charles lived in the hope that the Turks might be emboldened to make an attack upon Russia, and that he himself should set out to meet a Swedish force advancing through Poland and thus cause a diversion in favour of the Turks. Hostilities did indeed begin early in 1711, and the Grand Vizier, working on a plan of campaign drawn up by Charles and with an enormous army under his command, succeeded in cutting off Peter's line of retreat and apparently had the Tsar completely at his mercy. Peter was seized by one of his fits of panic, but having no direction in which to run away, sent cart-loads of money to his opponent and managed to secure safety by the signing of the Peace of Pruth on 11th July. Charles arrived on the scene a few hours later, and to his chagrin and horror found that the longed-for chance of getting even with Peter of Russia had completely collapsed.

Thereafter the stay of Charles XII. on Turkish soil reads like a tale from the Arabian Nights or a mediæval romance of chivalry. The Sultan had grown tired of his guest, and was becoming bored by the

fiery appeals for another war against Russia. He threw out hints to induce Charles to go. The King resolutely ignored them. The Sultan intimated that force might have to be used. Charles sent word that he would break the head of the first Turk that tried such methods. Then the Sultan gave orders that his officers should seize the King and bring him, dead or alive, to Adrianople.

This was to be a real full-dress affair: twelve thousand Turks and Tartars; a dozen guns; and a Pasha of Three Tails at the head of things. Charles at once set about turning his house into a strong-point. The doors and windows were fortified with iron bars. The surrounding houses—there were five of them, also built of stone—were connected by barricades. The King directed the work and took part in it with his own hands. All his household down to the scullions were armed. A regular scheme of defence was drawn up. A final parley was held between a Tartar Khan (acting for the Three-Tailed Pasha) and the Comptroller of the Royal Household for the King of Sweden. "Do you think," sneered the Comptroller, "that His Majesty is coming to kiss your slipper?" "Withdraw, infidel," was the Khan's haughty reply. Is there not a touch of the Arabian Nights in this?

It was on Sunday the 1st of February 1713 that the contest began. Charles was present at Divine Service in his house when an uproar was

heard, and the Turkish army was seen charging the camp at full speed. At once Charles leaped upon his horse and rushed to the outworks, only to find that his Swedes and Poles had been utterly routed. The King then cut his way back to the house accompanied by his officers. The house was full of janissaries busy looting, and Charles, mustering six officers and thirty-four soldiers, drew his sword and dashed into the nearest room. Thence he passed into the grand saloon, which was crowded with some two hundred marauders, and a terrific struggle took place. Charles fought like a madman. Three janissaries attacked him; two were killed almost at once by the King and the third severely wounded. It was related afterwards that the two dead janissaries were spitted on the long sword of the King by the same thrust. Eventually the house was completely cleared of Turks, with the loss of but nine or ten Swedes. Charles then barricaded the windows and repulsed an attempt to storm the house with heavy loss. The Turkish artillery was now brought into action, but without much effect, and as a last resource the Turkish commander resolved to burn Charles out. The roof was set on fire with blazing arrows. The King held his ground until the roof began to fall in, and then, heading a sortie, he charged out to cut his way through the Turkish ranks. On the threshold he stumbled and fell—some say

over his own spurs. Instantly he was overwhelmed by janissaries who threw themselves upon him, and he was led, disarmed, blood-stained and begrimed with smoke, to the tent of the Pasha of Three Tails. The Pasha was courtesy itself. He raised up his voice in blessings to Allah for His Majesty's safety. Charles replied airily that it was a mere nothing and that he could have put up a better fight if some others had shown the keenness they ought.

Charles was escorted with all ceremony to a residence near Adrianople, and as an anticlimax to those berserk hours at Bender he took to his bed and remained there nearly eleven months. He saw no one but his own officers, who would read to him and play chess with him at times. Charles lost practically every game; for he disliked seeing the poor pawns and pieces sacrificed in defending their sovereign, and he would therefore move his king into the firing line in a way that was asking for trouble. By now Charles had been absent from Sweden for nearly fourteen years. It was clear that he could not remain in Turkey—even by staying in bed—for ever. Appeals came to him from his sister and from the Swedish senate urging his immediate return, and, escorted to the frontier by a Turkish guard of honour, Charles started on the long journey northward in the closing days of September 1714.

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Six weeks later a horseman, with two others following him, travel-splashed and white with snow, drew bridle late at night at the gate of Stralsund, on the Baltic. The tallest of the three demanded admission, saying he was the bearer of important despatches. The sentinel called the commander of the guard. The commander of the guard sent one of his soldiers to the Governor, who, "at first a little surly of humour, sprang out of bed, and embraced the knees of the snowy man." The snowy man was Charles XII. He had some weeks earlier shaken off his Swedish retinue, and with but two companions had ridden fast to reappear, after five years of eclipse, once more upon the stage of things. Here for thirteen months he was to play a valiant part, but in a losing game. Here for the first time for fourteen years he trod, if not his native soil, at least that of his own dominions.

But this small enclave on Swedish territory, nicked out of the Baltic coast-line of Germany, was now in a parlous state. The War of the Spanish Succession had terminated; the various Powers that had been engaged in it were loth to unbuckle the harness until any pickings that were to be found lying about should be gathered in; Prussia under Frederick William I. had come to the front as a strong military power; and the long absence of the King of Sweden exposed his German strip of territory to obvious danger. Soon Charles

XII. was at open war with England, Hanover, Russia, Saxony, and Denmark.

The siege of Stralsund was begun in June 1715 by the King of Prussia—he had already taken Stettin—who was soon joined by a Danish army; a combined force of 40,000 against Charles, who to man the works of Stralsund had but a fourth of that number. The siege lasted till mid-winter, under continual fierce counter-movements and desperate rallies from the Swedish Lion, but a lion now standing at bay against the world. An important outwork was lost early in November, and the flying Swedes had difficulty in escaping into Stralsund. Next the island of Rugen was occupied by the enemy. Charles had crossed to it with 6000 men—all that he could spare from the defence of Stralsund—but he was outwitted by the Prussians, who landed and fortified themselves at a portion of the coast which Charles had overlooked. In vain did the King lead attack after attack against the palisades erected; in vain did he reach the palisades and even tear at them with his hands. Charles had a horse shot under him and was himself struck on the heart by a spent bullet. Withdrawal was imperative, and the Swedes quitted the island, leaving eight guns and four hundred dead behind them.

For six weeks longer Stralsund still held out, but the end was inevitable. Work after work was captured; the storming of the place might be expected

any moment; and, as at Poltava, there was but one opinion among his generals—“Save the King, and then surrender.” With difficulty Charles was persuaded to go. At nightfall on 12th December he put to sea in an open boat. The next day he was picked up by one of his own ships, and on the 15th landed near Trelleborg on the southernmost point of the Swedish coast.

The situation in Sweden was now wellnigh desperate, and was not rendered less so by the *intransigence*, and indeed the invincible obstinacy, of Charles. In 1718 he determined to make a second invasion of Norway, reckoning that even if he had now no fleet he could attack Danish territory by land. After severe hardships the siege of the frontier fortress of Fredericksten began. Here came the end. One night the King climbed the interior slope of a parapet to gaze towards the enemy's works; an hour later his body slid back into the trench. Those who rushed to his assistance found him lying dead from a bullet that had passed through his brain.

Thus perished at the age of thirty-six one of the most remarkable figures of his time. As a fighting soldier Charles XII. was in the highest class; as a general his military skill

was overclouded by a too credulous belief in his own invincibility. He found Sweden with a great military reputation; by his daring and resolution he raised her to an extraordinary degree of power. But in so doing he had completely exhausted his country. The startling successes which he had won before he came to manhood, if they did not actually turn his head, did, it would seem, militate against the balanced judgment without which wars, as apart from battles, can never be won.

Johnson in his ‘Vanity of Human Wishes’ found the career of Charles XII. a subject on which a philosopher could moralise with effect. The young warrior with “his frame of adamant and soul of fire”; his proud career of conquests; the check to that career at Poltava; the hero compelled “to show his miseries in distant lands”—all these were dwelt on. Yet, asks the poet, could not Fortune have vouchsafed him at least a glorious end amid the fall of empires and the clash of mighty hosts? It was not to be.

“His Fall was destined to a barren
Strand,
A petty Fortress, and a dubious
hand,
He left the Name at which the
World grew pale
To point a Moral, or adorn a
Tale.”

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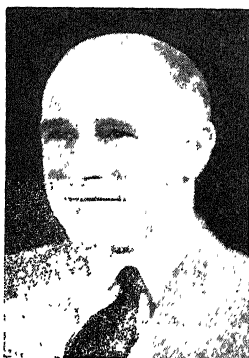
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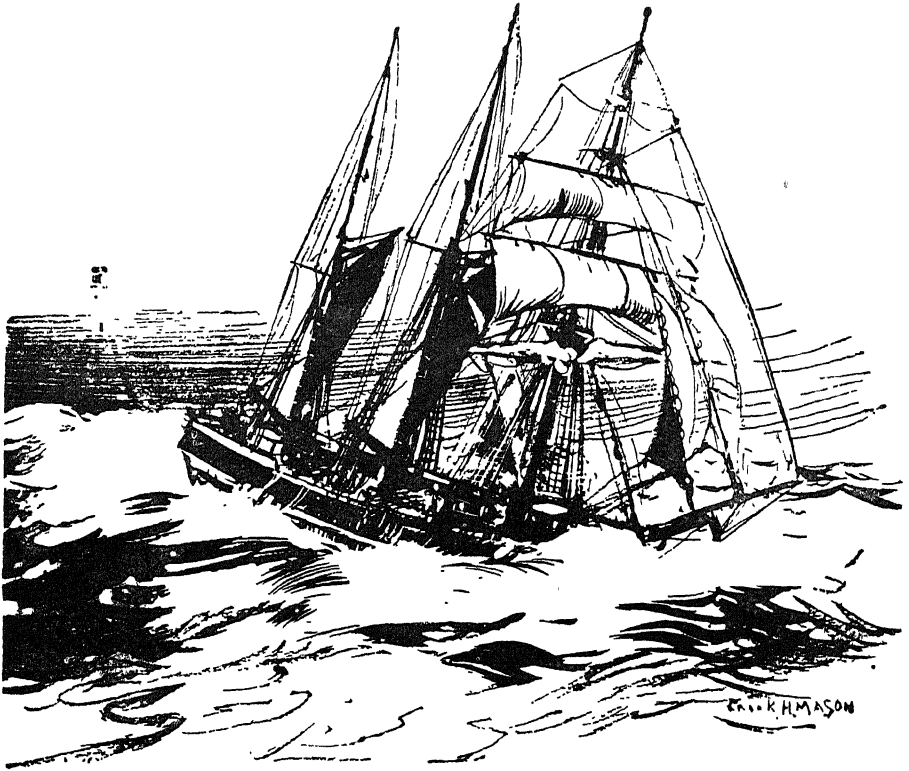
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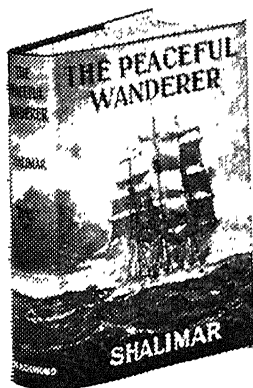
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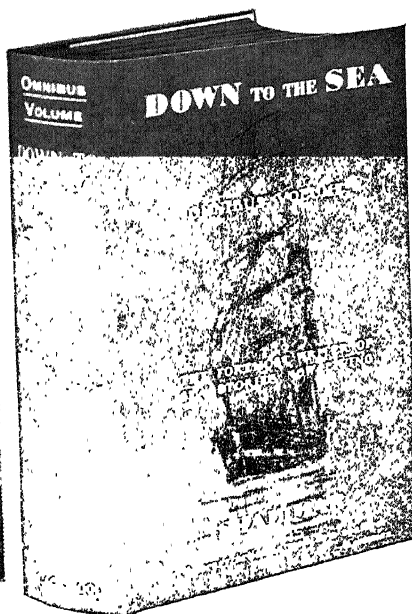
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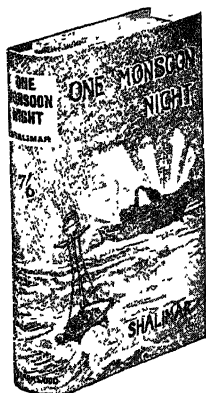
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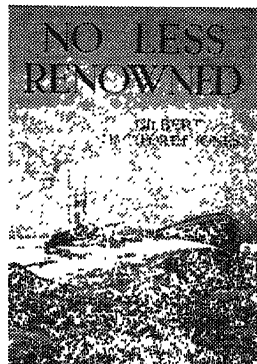
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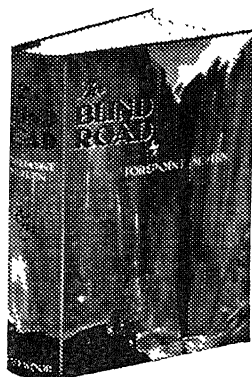
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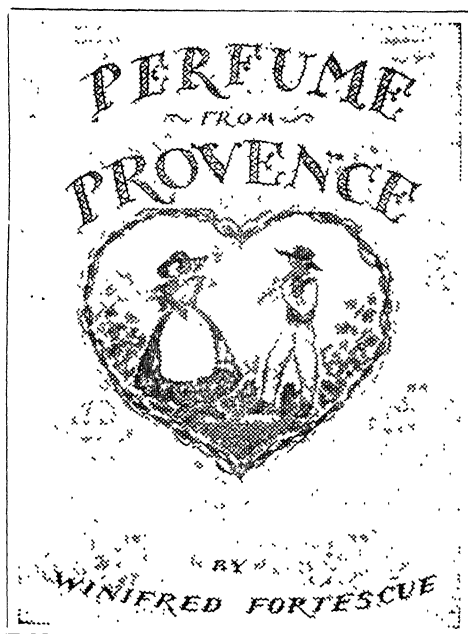
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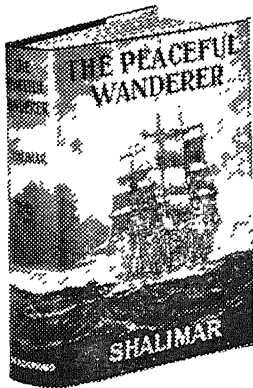
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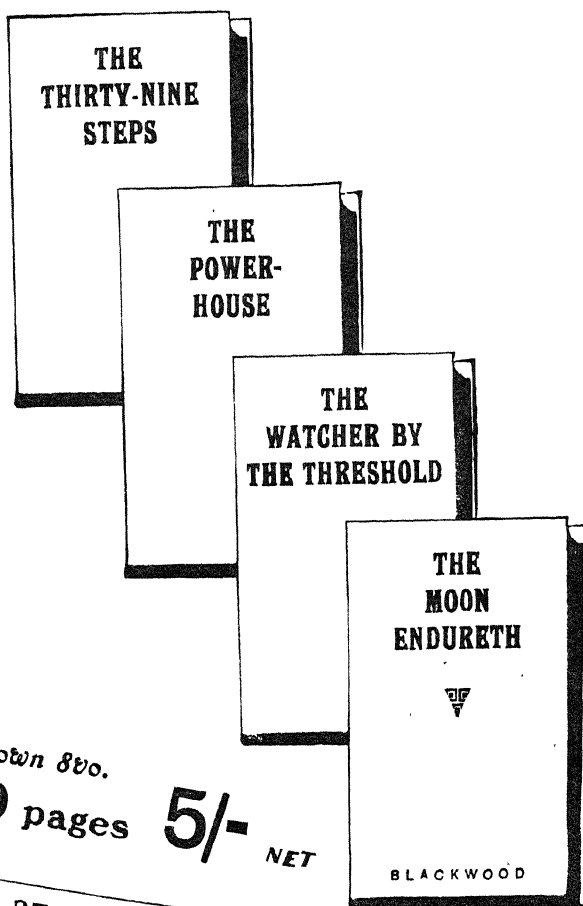
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